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General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

13th plenary meeting
Friday, 29 September 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tsaty-Boungou (Congo) Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will first hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco, His Excellency Mr. Abdellatif Filali, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Filali (Morocco) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, I am pleased to extend to the President my sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

I am convinced that his diplomatic experience, excellent knowledge of international issues, and the many responsibilities that were assigned to him will ensure the success of our work and help us achieve the best results.

I also wish to assure the President that the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco will spare no effort in cooperating with him and in providing every support to facilitate his task. I also salute in him the representative of a country which shares strong ties of friendship, cooperation and good-neighbourliness with Morocco.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing President, Mr. Amara Essy, for his excellent conduct of the work of our previous session.

I should like also to express my deep appreciation to Mr. Boutros-Boutros Ghali, the Secretary General, for his untiring efforts towards the promotion of peace and security and for his constant endeavours in facing up to the tremendous responsibilities shouldered by the United Nations as a result of the developments that took place in the world over the past few years.

Those efforts of the Secretary-General acquire greater importance at a time when our Organization faces an unprecedented financial crisis.

This session stands out by the fact that it coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization. We may

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recall the day, 50 years ago, which gave rise to hope that we were embarking on an age of emancipation, liberty, independence and the maintenance of peace and security. That day heralded, for all humanity, the dawn of a new era that was received with joy as it was to be the beginning of a path of dialogue and cooperation that affected an alternative to violence and confrontation.

The important changes in international relations witnessed by the world over the past few years did usher in a new world situation. However, the fact that, in the new situation, the economic interests of the major Powers continued to have the upper hand frustrated the hopes of the developing countries that a new era of genuine solidarity between the rich and the poor was about to emerge and serve the legitimate interests of all the members of the international Community.

As we see it, the economic and social situation in most countries of the South gives no cause for hope or optimism. The gap between developed and developing countries is still widening, and the economic, commercial, and social problems of the developing countries are only worsening. This has thrown the doors wide open to such phenomena as extremism, fanaticism and terrorism, scourges that we must confront and curb.

In order for us to do so, the world economy has to be restructured in the context of genuine cooperation between all nations and an earnest dialogue in which the rich countries would shoulder their full responsibilities towards the promotion of an international partnership whose aim should be to find viable solutions to this problem that would work in favour of men's moral and material interests, wherever they may be: North or South.

While we welcome the initiatives taken towards the restructuring of the world economy since the ratification of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the subsequent inception of the World Trade Organization, and the steps taken by numerous developing nations, including Morocco, to restructure their economies with a view to integrating those economies into the world economy, we believe that such initiatives, by themselves, will not be sufficient to lead to solutions to the economic, trade and financial problems that beset the third world. We hope that the World Trade Organization will adequately and fully discharge its responsibilities and that it will be provided with the necessary means that would make it an effective tool and enable it to translate into reality the commitments made.

We hope that the current negotiations amongst the various international organizations concerned will lead to the desired coordination between monetary, financial and trade policies and thereby lead to the laying of genuine foundations for free international trade, wherein there would be no deterioration in the terms of trade or any decline in the prices of primary commodities. We also hope that those discussions will mark the beginning of a reconsideration of the concept of foreign debt from which the developing countries suffer.

The African continent is in the grip of a disastrous economic and social situation. Morocco views with concern the deterioration of this situation as it is part of the African continent, and is a member of the African family that has a long history of shared struggle for liberation and emancipation which binds it to all the peoples of Africa.

Given the gravity of a situation, that portends untold tragedies, Morocco calls on the international community to make a concerted effort to find a solution to the worsening problems of Africa.

In our opinion, the strategic perspective and the approach adopted so far in tackling those problems will not lead to any improvement or substantial qualitative change so long as the international community does not commit itself to a long-term strategy that embodies concrete commitments in favour of Africa. Such a strategy, as we see it, should be part of a comprehensive perspective aimed at improving the level of social and economic development in Africa with a view to integrating the continent into the world economy and enabling it to benefit from its dividends. In this respect, Morocco calls for a speeding up of the implementation of the Convention to combat desertification in order to meet the needs of our continent at both the national and international levels.

In spite of the efforts made by the United Nations and repeated calls from this rostrum to give pride of place to dialogue, and to solve conflicts by peaceful means and preventive diplomacy, some regions in the world continue to be the scene of armed conflicts and civil wars which crush our hopes of establishing lasting peace and security. By the same token, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, still threatens our world and should be addressed most earnestly in order to avoid irreparable disasters.

In this respect Morocco has effectively contributed to the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and hopes that all countries will accede to this important Treaty and thereby ensure its universality. Morocco also hopes that the Middle East will be exempt from all weapons of mass destruction, as has been the case for other regions of the world. This is one of the noble objectives that the Organization should work for so that all may channel the funds tied up in this field to development and to combating all forms of underdevelopment.

It is indeed cause for optimism that progress has been made in the negotiations on the test-ban treaty, especially the pledge made by the Conference on Disarmament to conclude a treaty concerning this issue before the end of 1996.

The era of colonialism is now a thing of the past. As a matter of fact, this has been one of the great achievements of the past 50 years. Unfortunately however, the two Moroccan cities of Sebta and Melilia and the neighbouring islands are still under Spanish occupation. These enclaves, which are part and parcel of Moroccan territory, and which overlook the Mediterranean sea, are thus the last remaining colonies in Africa. Such a situation is indeed a strange anomaly which neither reason nor logic can accept and which clashes head on with the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Charter.

In this context, may I recall the major stages which Morocco has gone through in order to complete its territorial integrity. Since its independence in 1956, Morocco started negotiations with Spain in order to complete its independence, hence the withdrawal, in 1958, from the region of Tarfaya, which is part of the Moroccan Sahara, then the withdrawal from the region of Sidi Ifni in 1969. In 1975, after a period of alternating dialogue and tension, Morocco recovered its other southern provinces. The only parts that are still under Spanish colonization are Sebta and Melilia and the neighbouring islands.

Morocco, which opted for dialogue as a fundamental principle in its policy *vis-à-vis* its neighbours, propounded that principle in international forums as the best means of avoiding armed conflict and sought to settle all problems by peaceful means, remains convinced that its historical ties with Spain, coupled with the two countries' common economic interests, will help overcome the difficulties that stand in the way of a solution to this dispute.

Morocco considers Spain to be one of its most important economic and political partners in view of the size of Spain's investments in Morocco, the volume of trade between the two countries, the joint development projects, such as the intercontinental link between Spain and Morocco that would link the African and European continents, as well as the burgeoning cooperation in the areas of culture and tourism.

We are convinced that if all this is taken into account, it would help resolve the disputes. We believe that the best framework for the desired settlement is to be found in the proposal made to Spain by His Majesty King Hassan II, to set up a reflection and consultation committee with the aim of finding a solution to the problem of Sebta and Melilia that would allow Morocco to exercise its sovereignty over the two cities and the neighbouring islands while preserving Spain's economic interests.

The Arab Maghreb Union has made considerable progress on the road to Maghreb unity. Morocco, which, like its neighbours, believes that the Union is a strategic choice, is determined to overcome the few remaining obstacles in the way of progress towards unity. In this era of economic blocs, the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union is an unavoidable necessity if regional integration is to be achieved, if challenges are to be met and if we are to ensure the progress and prosperity of our peoples, who are united by the bonds of common language, religion and history.

I am sure that idea of establishing the Arab Maghreb Union, which reflects an ancient historical reality, will come to fruition as have other regional blocs that have achieved a high level of integration and unity even without enjoying the bonds that unite the Arab Maghreb Union.

In recent years, the Middle East has witnessed many developments that have created an opportunity to achieve peace and to end the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the principles of land for peace, respect for the national and political rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of their own State, with Al Quds as its capital.

One of the decisive events in the region was the conclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement signed at Washington D.C., which confirmed that the peace process in the region is irreversible, notwithstanding the obstacles it is encountering. The Jordanian-Israeli

agreement also confirmed that the logic of tolerance and coexistence in the framework of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on international legality is now an absolute necessity for all.

In this connection we welcome with satisfaction the Taba Agreement that was signed in Washington D.C. between the Palestinians and the Israelis, an important milestone on the road towards the establishment of peace and security in the region. It is our fervent hope that the two parties will be able to overcome existing obstacles and show a firm determination to settle pending problems, bearing in mind the legitimate interests of all and respecting their commitments and the behests of international legality.

Optimistic as we are about the progress on the Israeli-Jordanian and the Israeli-Palestinian tracks, we hope that positive development will materialize on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks which would lead to results acceptable to all parties on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

Last year, in an attempt to promote the peace process in the region, Morocco acted as host to the very first Economic Summit for the Middle East and North Africa, which stressed the need to establish economic programmes as part of an effective partnership that would create better living conditions for the peoples of those regions. The Summit also emphasized the need to assist economic development in Palestine to enable the Palestinian people to promote their economic and developmental institutions and to participate on an equal footing in the development of the region.

We hope that the Amman Summit will be another milestone in the mobilization of the potential of public and private sectors to consolidate the peace process by promoting economic cooperation to help in the region's development and by meeting the aspirations of the peoples of that region after progress, prosperity and just and lasting peace.

The United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran have not yet arrived at a final settlement of their dispute over the future of the islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tumbs. In light of our historical relations with those two sisterly countries, and given the relations of neighbourliness and friendship between the peoples of the United Arab Emirates and Iran, we look forward the day when there will be a final solution to this dispute so that the region may revert to the spirit of coexistence that once characterized it.

The tragedy of the Bosnian people is almost without precedent in the history of mankind. It is even more alarming in light of the international community's failure to stand up against murders, displacement of populations, ethnic and religious cleansing, mass rape and the destruction of the country's culture heritage and civilization.

It is regrettable that the world should be witnessing such procrastination under the new world order, which purports to be founded on respect for human rights. It is also somewhat amazing that that new world order, which had mustered all its resources to extinguish every hot spot outside the Western world, should now fail to protect a people in the very heart of Europe who are daily being subjected to Serb aggression.

Morocco, which had been under the impression that the problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina would be settled in 1992, was surprised at the deterioration of the situation there and by the escalation of violence and massacres. In this connection, Morocco has consistently discharged its human and Islamic duty to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, mitigate the agony of the Bosnian people and provide humanitarian assistance to them.

I am convinced that the meeting of the Islamic and International Contact Groups in Paris on 7 September 1995 and the meeting that took place between the two groups yesterday, 28 September 1995, are likely to open the way to coordination and consultation to achieve the expected objectives and strengthen the foundations for peace in the region on the basis of justice and international law.

We welcome with hope the results of the 8 September 1995 meeting between the Bosnian, Serb and Croat ministers at Geneva.

We hope that the agreement in principle concluded by the parties to the conflict last Tuesday, 26 September 1995, in New York will be a decisive step towards alleviating the sufferings of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that it will help them achieve their hopes for peace, tranquillity, sovereignty, safeguard the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina

and thus ensure peace, reconciliation and stability in the region.

With regard to the question of the so-called Western Sahara, Morocco took the initiative of proposing the organization of a referendum and accepted the settlement plan presented by the Secretary-General. Morocco also agreed on the criteria concerning voter identification and made serious efforts in full cooperation with the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Morocco has also offered financial assistance and the necessary support to overcome difficulties and implement the settlement plan in good faith.

In view of the obstacles we are now encountering in connection with the identification process with regard to all persons of Saharan origin, we appeal to the Security Council to take the necessary measures and to mobilize all the appropriate means that would safeguard the settlement plan against collapse and remove the spectre of tension from the region.

I take this opportunity to renew our commitment and stress our firm determination to continue our full cooperation with the Secretary-General in order to complete all the procedures and take all necessary measures to organize the referendum early next year, as suggested by the Secretary-General in his latest report to the Security Council on the issue.

We hope that the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization will be an opportunity to study all the ideas and suggestions put forth in order to improve and redress the structures of our Organization so that, given all the changes in the world, it can meet the actual needs of the international community. I refer in particular to ideas regarding the enlargement of the Security Council and improvement of its working methods, which must be carefully considered and given ample time so that results can be achieved and a consensus can be reached.

We are confident that the perseverance and earnest determination we have shown in taking up challenges will be the best incentive for us to face up to the new challenge and enable our Organization to fulfil its duties adequately at the dawning of the twenty-first century, which we hope will be the beginning of a new era of peace, stability and life in dignity for humanity.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zambia, His Excellency Mr. Christon Tembo, on whom I now call.

Mr. Tembo (Zambia): On this important occasion, allow me to extend to the President the congratulations of the people and the Government of Zambia upon his well-deserved election to preside over the work of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We are confident that his broad experience and ability will afford us sure guidance at this historic session of the General Assembly, which marks half a century of the United Nations.

I would also like to pay tribute to the outgoing President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, who so successfully presided over the session with great skill and expertise. He leaves the presidency with a record of successes that has enhanced the Assembly's deliberative role.

My delegation would also like to put on record its appreciation for the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has continued to lead the Organization with skill and tenacity under trying circumstances.

As we observe and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we should also take this opportunity to take stock of the Organization's past performance, evaluating its achievements and failures, and then proceed to map out our future direction.

It cannot be disputed that the United Nations has made outstanding contributions to world peace and security and the promotion of development throughout the world.

The United Nations has conducted successful peace-keeping operations in various parts of the world, including Cambodia, Mozambique, Haiti and, very recently, Angola.

It is also as a result of United Nations engagement that the world is now entering an era in which the ideals of human rights and democracy are gaining support in many countries. The United Nations is on record as having provided electoral assistance to over 40 countries. This has gone a long way in ensuring free and fair elections.

The United Nations has been a strong source of relief from human suffering. Through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations has provided food, shelter, medicine and education for millions of refugees the world over.

Very recently, in 1990, through the efforts of our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the personal dedication to children of the late James Grant, the World Summit for Children was convened here in New York, where the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted. This Convention has become the first to receive universal acceptance. This is a remarkable achievement in itself.

Against this background of achievements, the Organization has had to deal with many formidable problems, such as the super-Power rivalry of the cold-war era, which resulted in a long period of paralysis in terms of the Organization's ability to take quick and effective decisions and in the increasing number of ethnic conflicts and tensions around the world, as evidenced by conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia and Georgia, among others.

The continued unfavourable international economic situation and environmental degradation are serious challenges that the United Nations has had to deal with.

Zambia is convinced that the United Nations remains the only world body with the capacity to galvanize political will to face these challenges as we approach the twenty-first century. As a country and Member State, we take this opportunity to reaffirm and renew our commitment to the United Nations.

It is quite clear that the United Nations will require a renewed vision for the next 50 years. The agenda to disarm throughout the world is not complete. My delegation strongly feels that as long as there is continued proliferation of weapons, there can never be any hope for lasting peace and security in any corner of the world.

My delegation, therefore, welcomes the successful conclusion, early this year, of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the Treaty was extended indefinitely. My delegation wishes to express our grave concern that, soon after the extension, some of the signatories to the NPT have resumed nuclear tests. This is not in the spirit of nuclear disarmament. We also congratulate those that have continued to observe their moratoriums and hope that they will not be swayed by those that are embarking on nuclear testing.

Zambia takes note of the ongoing negotiations in Geneva on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT), and urges a speedy and successful completion of that treaty. We also welcome the efforts to strengthen the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention.

However, in spite of all these positive developments in the area of disarmament, there are, of course, other critical areas, such as complete and general disarmament, nuclear technology, nuclear-weapon-free zones, mine clearance as well as peaceful uses of nuclear energy, that remain unresolved. We therefore urge all concerned to give special attention to such issues, in the hope that this will enhance security guarantees.

The issue of specific concern to southern Africa, which has emerged from a long period of conflict, is land mine clearance. Many of our people continue to die from uncleared land mines. Accordingly, we call upon the international community to increase its support for the regional efforts being carried out through the Southern African Development Community to de-mine the affected areas in the southern Africa region. In this regard, we wish to express our appreciation to the European Union, which continues to support our efforts in mine clearance.

In the area of peace-keeping, Zambia realizes that pursuing peace has not been an easy task for the United Nations and is not likely to be so in the foreseeable future. The Organization needs a clear vision of what must be done in each particular case. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace, we believe, provides that vision. It is an important agenda, which has already assisted in many areas of our peace-keeping operations.

We are aware that a quick and effective response in time of conflicts depends on a number of important factors, especially the political will by the Member States to meet resource requirements. In this respect, Zambia supports the establishment of a rapid- reaction-capability force, which we believe will enhance peace-keeping operations and save lives.

The protection, promotion and enjoyment of human rights is an obligation Governments and peoples the world over must uphold. The dignity of life cannot be enhanced without full observance of human rights. Zambia therefore believes that the United Nations must continue to give high priority to human rights issues.

In this regard, Zambia is gratified that the Fourth World Conference on Women, recently held in Beijing, China, recognized that women's rights are human rights, and that Governments committed themselves to the implementation of that human rights agenda.

The Beijing conference and the other recent United Nations conferences — the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Social Summit — will all need active and integrated follow-up throughout the United Nations system. In this follow-up, the roles of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are crucial not only for the efficient implementation of the programmes of action, but also for strengthening the Organization in the social and economic fields. Zambia recognizes the urgent need to revitalize the Council's functions, including improved and enhanced utilization of its various functional committees. Harmonization of institutional arrangements in the entire United Nations system will need to be undertaken as a matter of priority.

In terms of the reform of the Security Council, Zambia believes it is necessary to expand the Security Council to enable it to become more representative. It is also our view that the Security Council needs to become democratic and transparent.

Zambia would like to see the United Nations give priority to addressing developmental issues in the new millennium. In this regard, I wish to state that Zambia attaches great importance to the realization of the Agenda for Development. Development is a critical area of concern for my own continent, Africa, where poverty, unemployment and social exclusion affect virtually every country. As we approach the twenty-first century, the international community should give added emphasis to the fight against poverty. By fighting poverty, we can assure the progress of individuals, which is essential to the sustained progress of all nations.

Zambia is therefore gratified that the World Summit for Social Development committed itself to accelerating the economic, social and human resources development of Africa and the least developed countries. The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in March this year, has, through its Declaration and Programme of Action, challenged Governments the world over to create opportunities through employment generation and social integration that should eradicate poverty. My delegation hopes that Governments will implement its Programme of Action.

The poverty obtaining in many developing countries is being exacerbated by the onerous debt burdens most of these countries have continued to carry since the early 1980s. The Naples terms, with the potential to achieve a 67 per cent debt reduction on either export credits or debt service, is only the beginning in offering durable debt relief to developing countries, especially with regard to those with very high debt service ratios. The creditor countries should move beyond modesty and offer terms that can in the shortest possible time frame reduce debt service ratios of the poorest developing countries to 21 per cent of their export earnings. This is the level recognized by the United Nations as the basic minimum requirement to ensure that the poorest developing countries overcome their debt problems and re-establish credit-worthiness. Coupled with the sustained underfunding of many structural adjustment programmes, a modest approach on promoting debt reduction can only have the ultimate result of undermining opportunities for growth, development and prosperity in developing countries.

As the World Trade Organization begins its formative years, a new challenge from this institution is emerging in developing countries that will add to the challenges of external debt burdens and poverty. This is the challenge of registering early net losses from the new system of multilateral trade as preferences are removed, food prices rise, subsidies decrease and commodity exports continue to face marginalization. This is especially pronounced for Africa, which, as we all know, has already recorded more than a decade of austerity. While we recognize the long-term opportunities developing countries will gain from the World Trade Organization, it still remains the duty of developed countries to make good their pledges reaffirmed at Marrakesh to compensate net losers in the new system of multilateral trade, by quickly specifying the terms of compensation.

Zambia realizes that establishing the foundations of international competitiveness is the key to getting a foothold in the world economy. Our reform measures, which started in 1991, are gaining momentum. The

challenge now is to move away from concerns over stabilization and liberalization to the stimulation of production, employment and labour productivity as the basic foundations for poverty reduction. This is being done at the same time as we are building on complementarities already established in the regional integration mechanisms of the Southern African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, of which Zambia is a member. However, our domestic reform efforts can only be sustained by generous debt reduction that improves our cash-flow position to levels which regenerate business confidence in Zambia. The debt overhang remains the single biggest barrier to recovery and development in Zambia.

In conclusion, I would like to state that Zambia will remain actively committed to achieving these priorities in the framework of the United Nations. We believe in the United Nations and have every confidence that our Organization will lead us into a new era of full of hope and prosperity.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, His Excellency Mr. Miguel Angel Burelli Rivas.

Mr. Burelli Rivas (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Everything that could be said has been said during this annual routine, in which each Head of State or Government, or Minister, stands before the United Nations General Assembly. If all the speeches were to be published in a compendium, the same universal themes would be repeated a thousand times.

The compendium would include the great, insoluble problems that, to various degrees, afflict the peoples of every continent, as well as the solutions that have already been found, and the promised solutions implicit in the constant efforts of this Organization, which, like any other human endeavour, has lived through 50 years of triumphs and frustration.

We must rejoice that, thanks to the Organization's vigilance and action, we have enjoyed — as never before — half a century of peace, although we lament the fact that we must now deploy efforts against violence born of intolerance, fanaticism and ethnic or religious strife that frustrate the achievement of the harmony for which mankind yearns.

Alongside the impressive achievements of the world community, these 50 years have also seen numerous local conflicts that have taken 23 million lives. Eighty seven per cent of the weapons sold and used in the world come from the five countries that are permanent members of the Security Council. And, unbelievable as it might seem, at this stage of our political evolution, two atomic Powers are causing anxiety with inexplicable nuclear tests for which we criticized other Powers.

But who can deny that in the fields of health, technology, environment, human rights, communications, the exploitation of the resources of the seas and many other fields, there is progress and hope, and at least a warning that awakens the universal conscience?

Today's statement by the Foreign Minister of Venezuela will be no different. Political scenarios change, as do ideologies, the most extraordinary crisis in history erupts, but life's dramas continue, with man bruised by change, but for the first time wavering between hope and bewilderment. This situation results from the fact that we have rushed from one era to another without the demolition caused by war, although we have had the enthusiastic and confident contribution of students and workers, who have devoted their free time to making it.

We note hardly any curiosity about the era we are approaching, an era as yet unnamed, though soon to be upon us it could be called anything: "post-capitalist", "post-socialist" or "post-industrial"; or it could simply be described as a time of transition between two periods that our generations share.

There has been talk, of course, of the end of history, with the end of ideological confrontation; that is precisely what makes history: incessant conflicts and passionate confrontations, fears and hopes, freedom and deprivation of freedom, in any of the forms of oppression that have always been applied.

Man today has the vague feeling that he is in contact with all other men through the miracle of the media, fibre optics, and cybernetic systems, and yet, now that there are more human beings with whom solidarity may be felt, solidarity is more precarious and man's loneliness is more poignant.

To create a different world based on a solid, complex and long-lasting Organization that has been taking shape since the end of the First World War, we

have begun to talk — since we want words to describe what is going on — of globalization, of integration, of the abolition of the nation-State and its replacement by large blocs, in order to produce through strength of numbers and unity a new dynamic different from military might.

Let us suppose, then, that the world of the future will have to be shaped according to regions, or large integrated groups or communities, regional or otherwise, that have a common cultural origin and wish to be identified with the others, because of the particular characteristics of their culture, such as tradition, language, religion and even mixed blood.

This is what strikes me, as I now appear for the first time before so distinguished a forum to speak on behalf of a country such as mine — a country with a modest economy, a small population, a territory that is medium-sized but which, owing to its excellent geographical situation, developed more than others; a culture of social freedom, of mixed races and of political independence, achieved by means of an epic struggle, not only for itself but for all of its American neighbours. Mine is a country that has never been at war with anyone, a country whose desire to see its neighbours freed from colonialism gave impetus to, and is inspiring, the brand-new Caribbean community, for instance. It is a country that, as we have proved time and again, will support and promote any initiative aimed at pacification in the region, as we did today in the Group of Friends of Guatemala, for example, and when we welcomed the latest agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Venezuela, like other countries, has been shaken — in our case since 1989 — by a severe crisis. Not so much economic or political as ethical in nature, this crisis has weakened our institutions and undermined our financial system, the collapse of which cost us 16 per cent of our gross national product and has attracted the not-always-understanding attention of international opinion.

This is the crisis that our Government inherited. Aware that its characteristics are atypical in our region, since its basic goal is to replace a paternalistic, oil-dependent model by an open culture based on work and self-reliance rather than on seeking the understanding of other countries, our Government is proceeding to solve our nation's problems, which, fortunately, are no match for our diverse and solid economic resources.

Venezuela is a country that has simultaneously — as if by magic — produced great thinkers, the most credible Utopians, the luckiest generals, the most visionary educators. My country, situated at the northern gate of South America, freed itself and other countries by following the dreams of Francisco de Miranda, brought to fruition by Simón Bolivár and Antonio José de Sucre, by systematic thinking and by the actions of Andrés Bello and Simón Rodríguez, among other well-known figures.

Simón Bolívar was clear-sighted. In that nebulous period of history that was the year 1815, he set out, from Jamaica — in the most famous political document of this part of the world — a dazzling prophecy of what the ideal destiny of Hispanic America was to be. To this day, no one can understand how he thought it up. He wrote:

> "It is a grandiose idea to try to make of the entire new world a single nation, with only one link to bind and tie together all the parts to the whole."

Once independence was achieved, he foresaw that an imperfect and erratic unity, such as that of the South, could be thrown off balance by the organization of the former 13 American colonies, whose integration he already anticipated. He also foresaw the power of the hard-working, driven race that would consolidate on the American continent the formidable and admirable nation that the United States has become, with its transcendent and unique feeling of liberty, since its founders left behind all prejudices and fears.

Bolívar visualized uniting the American half that was discovered, populated and moulded in all its aspects by Spain and Portugal, seeing it as one that must necessarily have its own way of life and of behaving. His vision was never based on rivalry, but rather, in keeping with his views on the destiny of this shared hemisphere, on the basis of emulation and friendship instead of strife as its driving force.

The colonizing Powers contributed, and based this half of America on, all they had brought with them. They established a religion, a society reminiscent of the offspring of settlers, whose physical surroundings and indiscriminate crossbreeding gave rise to a feeling of unfettered freedom and equality. This, in turn, engendered irrevocably an equally free spirit of social democracy, which Latin America has never since lacked, not even during the long periods when political democracy was non-existent.

In 1826, Bolívar, the Liberator, convened the Congress of Panama to speak there, for the first time in

history, not of sacred or profane alliances of war, but of alliances for peace. The thoughts he presented gave rise to the idea of an organized international community, first of all for the Americas, through the Pan-American Union, which in turn gave rise to the present Organization of American States (OAS), then to the League of Nations and finally to this Organization, which has given humanity, together with peace, all the possibilities that peace offers.

This is an exceptional community, the largest in the world, since it extends from the southern border of the United States all the way south to Patagonia, uniting the greatest number of peoples and republics with similar characteristics. Here, the various languages spoken in Spain fortunately became one, revitalizing the Castilian tongue, and similarly, the Portuguese language, which in Brazil is a language as open and soft as America itself. In the northernmost point of America, the imprint of France in Canada, as well as the Hispanic minority in the United States, are living reminders of this community.

In geographical terms, we are larger than other official communities, since the United States' surface area covers 9,372,000 square kilometres and Europe's covers 10,404,000 square kilometres. But we cover 20,000,000 square kilometres, and in these, the future of humanity is pulsing.

In political and spiritual terms, we are history's largest laboratory, at once a mystery and a promise — an absolute wonder that the future is revealing day by day. The seed of a new world, different from our expectations, is growing among us.

We are not the only five hundred million human beings to be allergic to the discrimination that will confront us in the year 2000. But we are the only human group to have been born and moulded without privileges, hesitations or complexes, on an equal footing. Though this sense of equality was repressed for three centuries by pragmatic measures that were respected but not implemented, and by the extreme zeal of monks who consulted no one in imposing a single faith on this immense geographical area, it was imbued with the spaciousness of the land, the rivers, the forests, the gentle climate, the mountains and prairies, whose influence produced a different type of human character. And I would repeat that this deep feeling and sense of fundamental freedom was something that had never happened to any other group of people.

Germán Arciniegas rightly said that

> "America was colonized by a man who was destined to a life of servitude in Europe. He became emancipated when he crossed from one shore to the other ... These wretches worked the continent with their bare hands, they were the poor, the landless, the illiterate of the popular Renaissance. Uneducated, unenlightened, their common destiny was to join together to become nations and so achieve justice."

And justice was the most absolute independence, influenced by American determinism.

In his sociologist's discourse, Bolívar said that we Americans represent a small human race. We have now become an important branch of the broader human race: the branch of possibilities and hope.

Our region would not enter into conflict with any other; not even with the one with which it shares the hemisphere, and which speaks a different language and has different customs. It will not be another international agency, or form another bureaucracy, or take up more room than the enormous space of its present physical and human geography.

In other words, we aspire to a beautiful Utopia, with no other pragmatism than the pride of being a Utopia with ever more solidarity; part of the universe with shared values, in search of the same destiny.

If other continents fashion communities around religious, racial or geopolitical banners, it is natural that we, Latin Americans, put forth ours with our own immense, protean sense of unity.

There was a time, as we followed a different cultural pattern, when we had a more orderly society and enjoyed political systems that brought us fame throughout the world. Practically all Latin American countries experienced a sort of golden age of culture and politics, marked by originality. We created literature. We forged our own laws with our own institutions. We pioneered the Law of the Sea; we produced the first system against nuclear weapons, with the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

A concerted Latin American community of nations would tend to recuperate and exchange training and educational systems capable of affirming our collective pride and personality, as Europe has already done, despite the diversity of its components, out of fear of the return of thousands of years of violence. Morally, the

Latin American community would be equal to the commercial and economic commitments made through ALADI, the Latin American Integration Association, as well as the Andean Pact, the Central American Common Market and MERCOSUR, all designed to form a front of solidarity and a crucial link in the economic integration of the universe.

A conscious Latin American community of nations would guarantee the sustainable development of the world's most varied and richest ecological systems, and would conceive not only of the larger spaces, but also of the importance of drinking water, of mining resources, and of the most varied and richest flora and fauna on the face of the earth.

Of course, we bring before the United Nations the many concerns that we have expressed about the fate of our Organization which, in its 50 years of arbitrating peace, has charted a new path for the peoples it represents. These concerns have prompted talk of reforming the Charter, in order for the Security Council, for instance, to take up and represent new geopolitical realities, and not only military might. This is the spirit in which my country, through the voice of its President, Rafael Caldera, has realistically and frankly proposed that Brazil be the permanent representative of Latin America in an enlarged Security Council. We have also spoken of the justification of agencies and powers, to make the cost of peace less burdensome; of the urgent need to adapt the Economic and Social Council to the necessities of our time, as well as the Council for Culture, Science and Technology, that is still the monopoly of industrialized centres. If a common market for technology were to be established, we would be truly keeping pace with history.

In America, although less than in Africa and Asia, we too are disturbed by the growing marginalization, the social injustice, the poverty bordering on famine, the insecurity exacerbated by the trade in illicit drugs and its consequences, which we witness. We produce terrible drugs in ever greater quantities to satisfy the voracity of the consumer markets. But, at the same time, we fight this scourge with the greatest tenacity and determination.

Our community has had the virtue of becoming practically a breeding ground for democracy, thanks to the steadfastness of its leaders and thinkers, as well as of the oldest but least championed regional organization. We must now see to it that democracy is purged of its dishonesty, and is cleansed. To this end, at the Hemispheric Summit in Miami, my Government proposed, with unanimous support, to put a stop to the impunity of corruption.

We consider that drug trafficking and political corruption are linked together by money laundering, under the cover of electoral contributions.

If democracy is to acquire a new respectability, it will be thanks to the common, concerted effort of America; an effort which this world Organization will also be called upon to make in the near future. That is because political corruption, a manifestation of the universal mafia, is not exclusive to our region and must be fought at the global level, just like illicit drug trafficking.

Very shortly, a world congress against corruption will be held in China, doubtless inspired by our example. We hold out great expectations for that congress. Indeed, we are keenly interested in anything that is sponsored and advanced by this Organization.

But I wanted to put before the Assembly the somewhat romantic idea of a Latin American Utopia, that it might inspire confidence in our neighbours in this hemisphere and hope in all other regions, whether on an organized basis or not. This is the spirit in which the Rio Group has endorsed the oft-repeated proposal for a Latin American Parliament.

Since the first Great War there has been a dislocation in Europe, which conveyed itself through Spain and Portugal; its aesthetic sense of life and existence through Italy; its modes of thought and philosophy through France; its political models through Great Britain and its lasting technologies through Germany. A regrettable dislocation occurred between Europe and Latin America, which is truly its most kindred continent, where we live as distant cousins, and still the most vibrant and promising offshoot of this lineage.

If we underscore the need to encourage this idea of our community, it is because it exists, in fact, although it is now beset with social problems that require combined treatment. It also has a legalist existence, since States such as Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela have incorporated it into their political constitutions.

The greatest tragedy of Latin America is its social condition, because of the imbalances characteristic of any

large society — irregularities in family patterns, deficiencies in education, the destruction of homes due to a lack of ethics — even housing, which was never one of our biggest problems, has become one, because it is linked to a sense of ethics at the family level. They are inseparably linked.

We could say, along with Arturo Uslar Pietri that, caught as we are between the millstones that grind the political universe, we have given more thought to building republics than to perfecting the nation that we are.

In spite of all its faults, the United Nations — the Organization we aspired to and wish to maintain — has created a civilization. It is responsible for over 300 international treaties: for the consolidation of democracy; for the dedicated protection of refugees; for self-determination, freedom, independence, the dignity of life, the arts, traditions; for coexistence — even if the phantoms of intolerance reappear; for trade free of protectionism; for children, women and our indigenous populations. And this, beyond civilization, we can call the new culture of the human family.

The Organization has grown and expanded since 1945, and the world with it. Its many offspring, scattered among the five continents and virtually all of them free, have led to a membership quadruple the number of the founding Members, among them Venezuela, which was represented then by its great Minister Caracciolo Parra Pérez. At that time he voiced an idea that has even greater validity today:

> "The peoples of the world must know each other morally and spiritually before they can manage to dispel the distrust and ignorance which keep them apart. We must build up a kind of intellectual network, above the network of the physical communications system which exists between nations, or parallel to it." (*Official Records of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, 7th plenary meeting, p. 23*)

This Organization's greatest achievement has been to offer the world a span of half a century during which, despite remaining fears, it could think of a new course for harmonizing all aspects of the life of societies with the nature that shelters those societies.

I congratulate the Organization and the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Diego Freitas do Amaral, in the hope that under his leadership the Organization will achieve all the success it deserves and needs. All races, all religions, all the most varied shades of humankind bring their aspirations and their claims here. This is an spacious home that has always endeavoured to live in the peace that is and must be the normal condition of life. It has been said that if health is the peace of the body, peace is the health of peoples. In that connection, the pre-Socratic philosopher wrote that in times of peace people awake to the crowing of roosters, while in times of war they waken to the clamour of arms; in peace the young bury the old, while in war the old bury the young.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call next on the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Al-Sabah (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of Kuwait, to convey to Mr. Diego Freitas do Amaral our sincere congratulations on his unanimous election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We have no doubt that his election is testimony to his expertise and skills, which will guarantee the able stewardship of this historic session. I assure Mr. Freitas do Amaral of the support and cooperation of the delegation of the State of Kuwait.

I take this opportunity to commend the President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, for his significant contribution to the work of this world body as well as for the wisdom he demonstrated as he presided over the deliberations of the last session.

Let me also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his immense efforts to streamline the structure and operations of the United Nations with an eye to the constantly changing modern world. Also, I should like to put on record Kuwait's support for the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General in his programme of action to deal with potential crises, the use of preventive diplomacy and the modalities of peacemaking and peace-building. In this context, special mention should be made of the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization, which demonstrates incisive vision combined with a dispassionate and in-depth analysis of the challenges facing the United Nations. The report outlines in a responsible fashion the failures suffered in some of the activities and operations undertaken by the Organization.

Next month, a great number of Heads of States or Governments will come to New York City to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. This massive presence will reflect a genuine belief in the role of the United Nations in building a world founded on justice, equality, coexistence and cooperation, free of tension and aggression. Their statements in this Assembly Hall will no doubt define their vision of the tasks the United Nations should undertake, their hopes for the ideal way of life that should prevail in the world and their determination to spare no effort in working for a better world. We cherish the wisdom of the founding fathers who established an Organization that embodies mankind's collective effort and hope in a better world that would differ from the world of war and strife, which wrought enormous destruction in terms of geopolitical entities, property and human life. States were destroyed and entire human populations were annihilated to satisfy the capricious whims of individuals who were driven by greed and hegemony. The scale of sacrifice and devastation, and the toll in human life caused by the development of atomic weapons was too immense to ignore. In the wake of such destruction, the world's leaders were determined to make the Second World War the last war the world should ever endure.

The signing ceremony of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco was, in a sense, a universal pledge to renounce the use of force, to embrace peaceful coexistence and to shun the power politics of blackmail and hegemony.

Regardless, the world continued to live thereafter in an environment that differed from the vision of the founding fathers of the United Nations. The intense bipolar strife that followed plunged the world in the maelstrom of a cold war that lasted for some five decades and spawned numerous regional conflicts with which the United Nations dealt within the constraints imposed by big Power rivalries. The inability to act was not due to impotence on the part of the United Nations but was the direct result of that bipolar rivalry. Notwithstanding, the Organization did manage to demonstrate its effectiveness in many a peace-keeping operation it undertook over the past decades and did manage to pacify many a volatile area.

In point of fact, experience has shown, over the past few decades, that the presence of the United Nations in the areas of tension did prevent the eruption of conflict and war in several flash points while its absence increased the chances of war. In all this, the United Nations has been a true reflection of the will of its Member States and, during the cold war, it provided a war-prevention mechanism by creating buffer zones between the belligerents. It was effective in containing tensions and in creating a climate of peaceful negotiation.

Over the years, the United Nations system has developed an array of effective and credible mechanisms, and gained wide-ranging experience and undoubted credibility that are employed to the common benefit of mankind. Over the past 50 years, since the adoption of its Charter, the United Nations has worked consistently to give real meaning to the dream of peoples all over the world, that of saving

> "succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which ... has brought untold sorrow to mankind" —

as expressed in the opening paragraph of the Charter. In large measure, the United Nations has lived up to its initial commitment.

Once the cold-war chapter was closed, the world started to edge towards rapprochement and meaningful dialogue. Once the arms race ended, an intense development-race started. The territorial-gains mentality gave way to a new commitment to intensive human development. Thus the new challenge facing our world now is the fulfilment of the immediate concerns of the human person and his or her right to live in dignity.

The world was an arena of rivalry between the super-Powers; now it has become a vast battlefield in the war against poverty and backwardness. The world was a battleground for fighting between various blocs in different regions; now many regions are closing ranks in a common effort to combat illiteracy and want. While the world was the theatre of many a battle, now the world has but one battle, that of trying to break loose from the grip of underdevelopment and backwardness.

We in Kuwait were in the forefront of donors for development. The volume of assistance we offered was the highest, in terms of gross national product, because we wanted to live in a world dominated by justice, a world whose hallmark is human compassion, a world in which the privileged will reach out towards the underprivileged without strings attached.

Along these lines, Kuwait welcomes the trend towards the consolidation of relations between members of the family of nations on the basis of equality. We are part of a common effort to eliminate tensions. We rely on

the collective will of nations to suppress aggression, and on global cooperation to confront underdevelopment.

Against this backdrop, we cannot overlook the need for reform and restructuring inside the United Nations itself with a view to bringing the system more into line with these new objectives. In 1945, 50 founding Member States signed the Charter. Ever since, 135 other States have joined the membership. Regardless, the Security Council, which is a major organ of the system, has, for example, retained its original structure — without change to reflect the enormous expansion in the membership of the United Nations. Nor has the Economic and Social Council shown, as yet, significant improvement in programme delivery, as dictated by the requirements of modern development, in the broad sense of such requirements, at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

We call for expanding the membership of the Security Council in order to enable the larger membership of the United Nations to participate in the process of decision-making. The change, which would enhance fairness, should be effected in such a way as to ensure balance between the requirements of efficiency and of expansion. We also call for more transparency in the Council's methods of work, for this, in our view, would reinforce our sense of collective participation and responsibility. We are also in favour of the trend towards better use of the resources of those States that can contribute significantly to peace-keeping operations and development activities.

The people of Kuwait participate in the celebrations of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary with a deep sense of gratitude to the Organization for its crucial role in liberating Kuwait from occupation. The people of Kuwait recognize the firm resolve of the world community in rejecting aggression and its commitment to putting an end to occupation. We cherish the determination displayed in the series of successive resolutions adopted by the Security Council from the second day of August 1990, when the people of Kuwait, together with the rest of the world, were taken by surprise by the sneak invasion of the State of Kuwait by Iraq. That naked aggression was committed in total violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international treaties. Beyond Kuwait, the invasion totally shattered the security and stability of the entire Gulf region.

In facing up to that blatant aggression, the United Nations did indeed live up to its principles and was true to its mission. It did indeed stand firm in upholding justice and in defending the victim.

Building on the Kuwait experience, it is our hope that the critical role that the United Nations can play will be fully utilized to further consolidate the underpinning of peace and to safeguard security and stability. The United Nations system can indeed provide deterrence in the face of those regimes that harbour schemes of aggression. There is a full range of measures and restrictions that the United Nations can put in place to ensure the isolation and curtailment of those aggressive regimes and, if need be, to strip them of their stockpiles of weapons that can be used in committing aggression.

The ultimate goal of the United Nations is to ensure equality, mutual respect amongst Member States and respect for the will of peoples. This would be conducive to peaceful coexistence among nations and would create a favourable atmosphere allowing freedom of choice in a democratic climate, where the stronger cannot dominate the weaker, nor can a big country exploit a small neighbour, nor one party assume a privileged role to the detriment of others.

Over a long period — since the end of the Gulf war — the Iraqi regime has continued to claim that it has fulfilled all its obligations under all Security Council resolutions relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, especially resolutions 687 (1991) and 715 (1991), and thus blamed the Security Council and the Special Commission for the delay in lifting the sanctions imposed on Iraq. The Chairman and staff of the Special Commission, as well as the Security Council itself, have been harshly and offensively criticized by senior Iraqi officials and the regime-controlled media.

In view of the recent dramatic surprises that unfolded in regard to the Iraqi armament programmes, a thoroughly legitimate set of questions arises — namely: Does the Iraqi regime have any more credibility? Who amongst us would be willing to accept Iraq's statements at face value? Who would believe its claims, echoed at every gathering or forum, that it had met its obligations? What about Kuwaiti property and military hardware looted from Kuwait? Who can go along with Iraq's assertions regarding Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages?

The tragedy of Kuwaiti and other prisoners held by Iraq remains unresolved four years after the liberation of Kuwait. This is due to the intransigence and procrastination of the Iraqi regime, which continues to sidestep a straightforward and genuine resolution of this human tragedy. This represents a failure on the part of

Iraq to fulfil its commitments under paragraph 30 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which demands that Iraq should cooperate fully with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Accordingly, Kuwait reiterates its appeal, to the Security Council in particular and to the world community in general, to continue to bring pressure to bear on Iraq, in a bid to bring this painful episode to an end. Iraq's false claims and lies that it is sincere in its efforts to close this case should be met with a firm stand. Indeed, this was the only course of action that forced Iraq in the first place to cooperate with the Special Commission.

Iraq must recognize that participation in the meetings of the Tripartite Commission and its sub-committee is not an end in itself. The purpose of these meetings is to secure the freedom of prisoners and to account for the missing persons. The litmus test of Iraq's cooperation in this area is the number of persons released or accounted for. Mere attendance at those meetings is an exercise in subterfuge, intended by Iraq to mislead world public opinion and to circumvent its obligations.

The final objective of Kuwait's overall policy is to ensure security and stability in our region. This goal will remain elusive unless and until Iraq implements fully and unconditionally all relevant Security Council resolutions.

We are aware of the difficulties endured by the Iraqi people. However, the responsibility for the suffering of the Iraqis lies squarely on the regime itself which wasted valuable time since April 1991 in pursuing a futile course of prevarication, deception, suppression of data and misinformation in regard to every area of its mandatory obligations.

The most recent events came to confirm our suspicions and fears, namely, the disclosure of the possession by Iraq of an arsenal of prohibited weapons of mass destruction, which were being prepared for use against peoples of the region without heed for the potential massive loss of human life.

In the meantime, let me take this occasion to set on record that Kuwait affirms the need to maintain the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. In view of the hardships faced by the Iraqi people, Kuwait has moved to send, through the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, food and medical supplies to the Iraqi civilian population in areas bordering Iran and in Northern Iraq. We will continue to pursue this policy on humanitarian grounds.

In the context of international endeavours to bring about just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, Kuwait follows closely the ongoing peace negotiations between the immediate parties. We support the negotiations process. In our view, this process should be anchored in the set of principles agreed upon, namely, full withdrawal in return for peace. Also, progress should be made on all tracks of negotiations. And the final peace package should be satisfactory to all sides because this would be the real guarantee of a lasting peace.

Kuwait did participate in the multilateral negotiations because we believed that our role within the multilaterals would strengthen the position of the Arab parties engaged in the bilateral talks and would eventually give momentum to the process as a whole. We fully appreciate the position of our sister State, Syria, which insists on full Israeli withdrawal from occupied Syrian territory in return for peace. Israel cannot attain full peace without complete withdrawal.

In the same vein, international efforts should intensify to ensure full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) which requires unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all Lebanese territory and the exercise by the Lebanese Government of its sovereignty over all Lebanese territory, including the South. In the end, the territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon must be preserved.

Furthermore, Kuwait supports the self-rule negotiations between the Palestine National Authority and Israel. In our view, the agreement signed yesterday in Washington, D.C. regarding the expansion of the self-rule arrangements represents an important step in the right direction towards the exercise by the people of Palestine of their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State.

In this regard, let me recall that Kuwait has pledged $25 million in aid to the development programmes undertaken by international specialized agencies in the self-rule areas. Indeed, Kuwait has started disbursement of funds earmarked for those purposes.

Also, we would like to underline the status of occupied Al-Quds, given its special significance to the three heavenly-revealed religions. We emphasize that Al-Quds is Palestinian territory under occupation and should as such be subject to the withdrawal conditions under Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

Kuwait welcomes the recent developments aiming at achieving a fair settlement of the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We expect such a settlement should satisfy the behests of international legality and be based on Security Council resolutions. In the wake of large-scale suffering, destruction and displacement, the people of the region now yearn for an overall settlement that satisfies the demands of all parties, especially the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina who insist on maintaining their independent State on their own territory without any interference from outside. My Government values the role played by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in opposing territorial expansion by the Serbs at the expense of other parties, as well as the actions taken to lift the siege on Sarajevo. It is our hope that this joint NATO-UNPROFOR action will persist until the declared objective is attained, that is, the conclusion of a final accord that brings security and stability to the whole region. It is our sincere hope now that the most recent agreement reached several days ago will be honoured by the parties to the conflict.

Experience has shown that regional groupings and arrangements can play an effective role in addressing contentious issues that create tension, impact adversely on peace and security and poison the relations amongst the people of a given area. These groups have also demonstrated a great sense of commitment in defusing flash points of tension that might undermine regional security.

A case in point is the experience of the Gulf Cooperation Council whose member States are firmly convinced that understanding among them is crucial in steering away from frictions and tensions. To them, dialogue is an essential channel of confidence-building among neighbour States. Since our established policy considers negotiations as the only viable means of resolving disputes, we call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond favourably to the call by the United Arab Emirates to resolve the problem of the islands occupied by Iran by the means suggested by the International Court of Justice. Such an approach would indeed reinforce the principle of understanding and negotiations to which we adhere as a primary component in relations among States.

Kuwait is convinced that world peace is indivisible and that it has far-reaching multiple implications on all of us. Accordingly, ethnic disputes, tribal wars and factional conflicts should be addressed as phenomena that can lead to massacres and genocides and to a total collapse of the afflicted communities. Therefore, in this year which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we ring down the curtain on the Rwanda tragedy before a solution is found, nor can we walk away from the catastrophe in Somalia, nor give up hope in the face of enormous odds in Afghanistan. All these remain burning issues despite the feeling by some Powers that they have moved outside the circle of global strategic limelight.

We call for scaling up the efforts and showing more determination in addressing these festering wounds within the framework of collective world peace.

The burden of debt is a major constraint on the budget resources of many nations, especially the developing ones. It aggravates their social problems and pushes up unemployment rates to a point where it undermines domestic security and stability and endangers the lives of millions of people.

Back in 1988, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, Emir of the State of Kuwait, launched from this rostrum an initiative to write off the foreign debt under which many least developed countries were suffering. Those countries have been victims of a complex host of factors that denied them the privilege of a calm life and indeed posed a real threat to their very existence. Kuwait, for its part, cancelled all interest on loans to these countries in a bid to alleviate their debt burdens. It is our hope that this approach would be expanded and that the developed nations would cancel the interest on their loans to the developing countries.

The dreams of the Charter's authors stood the test of time and transcended the tensions and limitations of the cold war. The era of the cold war was characterized by the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction to the detriment of construction needs. It represented a hard drive to acquire the means of annihilation at the expense of the means of development. Prestige was put ahead of real meaningful growth. Human ingenuity was put in the service of human exploitation rather than in the service of enhancing human freedoms. That chapter is now over. And we have entered a new epoch in which we have to heed the rational calls for civilized conduct in order to build up an atmosphere of genuine brotherhood and harmony. This can only be achieved by our collective endeavour that emphasizes our universal identity. Only through such a common effort can we pool together the resources and energy of all peoples, big and small, to achieve a strategic consensus that would translate into a reality the dreams envisioned 50 years ago when the Charter was signed.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia, His Excellency Mr. Mate Granic.

Mr. Granic (Croatia): Let me first extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the distinguished office from which he will guide the work of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that his experience and commitment to the noble principles of the United Nations Charter will guarantee that this session will be marked by new vigour, commitment and determination. I wish to express our gratitude also to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for the fine, skilful manner in which he presided over the work of the last session of the General Assembly.

The world we live in has been deeply and positively affected by the end of the cold war and national emancipation in Central and Eastern Europe, and Western Asia. Many hotbeds of crisis have been extinguished or are on the way to being resolved, from Eastern Asia and South Africa to the Middle East.

Mr. Obadi (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

However, many problems having a negative impact on international relations remain unresolved, including the crisis in south-eastern Europe. Most disquieting are the dangers of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. The world is still faced with various forms of terrorism. There is a grave danger resulting from the illicit trade in narcotics. Widespread abuses of human rights continue as do the problems of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and national and religious intolerance. The solution to the problem of underdevelopment requires more concerted and coordinated efforts.

In order to be able to deal with the many problems facing the world, it is necessary to have a vital and efficient United Nations.

Following the end of the cold war there was a period of optimism, renewed hope and expectation that the United Nations would finally play the role which had been envisaged for it at the time of its founding, almost 50 years ago. However, we have recently experienced severe disappointment at the inability of the United Nations to fulfil all these expectations; this has resulted in the loss of credibility by the United Nations.

The causes for its loss of credibility are many and varied, and among the most important is the failure of many United Nations peace-keeping operations to achieve their assigned goals. This is not to say that there have not been successful United Nations peace-keeping missions; this is evident from the operations in Cambodia and southern Africa.

One way in which the peace-keeping or peacemaking missions of the United Nations could be improved is by the establishment of a United Nations military force of a more permanent nature or one that could be assembled quickly, consisting of contingents from specific countries or regional arrangements. Such a force should be constructed in such a way as to make sure that its national contingents acted to implement Security Council resolutions and not to promote the policies of their States. In this regard I wish to express the Republic of Croatia's interest in providing troops for United Nations peace-keeping operations.

However, in order to make the peace-keeping functions of the United Nations more effective it is necessary to reform the body which is primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security — the Security Council. It is also important that the composition of the Security Council reflect the new political and economic realities which have emerged since its formation after the Second World War. Due regard must also be given to proper geographical balance as well as to the increase in the membership of the United Nations. Making the Security Council more representative and democratic will also enhance its credibility as it will then be a more legitimate body representing the will of the international community. This will no doubt serve to facilitate the implementation of its resolutions.

In this regard, the Republic of Croatia supports an increase in the number of both the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council to a point which will not negatively affect its effectiveness. I wish to reiterate Croatia's support for the admission of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the Security Council due to the actual, as well as potential, contribution of these two countries to the cause of international peace and security and to other aspects of the work of the United Nations. Additionally, serious consideration should be given to the possibility of one or more developing countries from Asia, Africa or Latin America being granted permanent-member status.

Despite the various setbacks which I have already referred to, the United Nations still has a critical role to play in resolving many of the world's problems, especially in regard to the environment and sustainable development.

In addition to economic well-being, equal attention should be paid to respect for the human rights of each and every individual. In this regard, Croatia reiterates its support for the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. José Ayalo Lasso, and commends the manner in which he has been performing his duty. As a further method of combating gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, Croatia supports the establishment of an international criminal court in the form of an apolitical legal organ of the international community.

By its geographical position, history, socio-cultural features, and political and economic orientation, the Republic of Croatia is a part of both Central Europe and the Mediterranean. As a European country in transition, Croatia has already achieved significant progress in the development of democratic institutions and adherence to internationally accepted standards concerning the rule of law and protection of human rights. It is also worth noting that the economic situation has been stabilized and even improved during the past two years, despite the extremely difficult conditions caused by Serbian aggression. Our national development strategy is outward-oriented, while the social policies and legal framework are based on the principles of pluralistic democracy, including an open-market economy.

As a country of European civilization and tradition, Croatia's strategic, political, economic and social orientation is clearly focused on active participation in the process of European integration. Croatia's harmonization with European legislation and criteria represents a crucial part of its national development. While Croatia is already a member of various European intergovernmental and interregional organizations, the forging of closer relations with the European Union, as well as full membership in the Council of Europe, are the basic pillars of Croatia's European policy. However, Croatia will seek to adopt an approach to reflecting a balance between its European orientation and its wider global cooperation on a multilateral and bilateral basis.

The Republic of Croatia endeavours to contribute to lasting peace and durable stability in south-eastern Europe, which can be achieved only by the normalization of relations among all States based on full and strict respect for and adherence to the principles of the inviolability of international borders, the territorial integrity of all States and the rights of minorities.

Croatia has effectively assumed its role as an indispensable factor in the search for peace, stability and security. In this sense, Croatia will continue to cooperate constructively with the relevant international forums and leading institutions or countries with a view to finding a political solution to the present crisis in the region.

In this respect — and bearing in mind the nature of the crisis and that its underlying cause has been and remains Serbian aggression — Croatia will continue to cooperate closely and coordinate its political, military and diplomatic activities with the Republic and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the basis of the Washington Agreements and other bilateral agreements and arrangements such as the Split Declaration. This is because one of the prerequisites for ensuring long-term stability and progress for Croatia is the settlement of the crisis in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thanks to the clarity and transparency of its national agenda, the decisiveness of its political leadership and its cooperation with the international community in pursuit of its vital national interests, Croatia has succeeded over the course of several years in reintegrating most of its occupied territories, paving the way for the return of some 110,000 displaced persons and refugees to their homes, as well as in revitalizing energy and transport communications throughout the country.

Croatia has also managed in very difficult circumstances to reach reasonable stability and to enjoy increased prospects for further development and the strengthening of the democratic system and institutions, combined with a significant level of economic stabilization.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in south-eastern Europe Croatia has constantly advocated a negotiated peaceful solution, with the active support and full participation of the international community, and on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Special emphasis has been placed on the imperative of fully regulating and normalizing Croat-Serb relations. Future relations between these two States are of paramount importance for lasting stability in south-eastern Europe. At the same time, Croatia is actively contributing to the quest for a solution to the issue of the

Bosniac-Muslim people, one that would ensure their national rights and provide stability for the region. Furthermore, in the interests of ensuring long-term security and stability, Croatia has advocated the need for the introduction of the confidence- and security- building measures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Croatia has always done its utmost to enable the international community to pursue its peace efforts and has consistently demonstrated utmost restraint in resorting to the use of force. When we had to use force, our military always strove to minimize the loss of life and the extent of destruction and to enable the international community to pursue its peace efforts. Croatian military operations have always been in self-defence and in response to the intransigence and non-cooperation of the rebel Croatian-Serb leadership, to the inability of the United Nations peace-keeping forces to fulfil their mandate, to complete deadlock in international mediating efforts, or to direct provocations and terrorist attacks against civilians from the rebel Serb side.

In the aftermath of the liberation of almost one fifth of our country in August, isolated instances of unlawful behaviour and human rights abuses have been recorded. My Government strongly condemns all such individual acts and has initiated proceedings against the perpetrators.

Croatia believes that its military operations during the first week of August, on both sides of the Croatian-Bosnian border, have substantially changed the balance of power and in so doing have created a window of opportunity for revitalization of the ongoing peace process. Croatia is of the opinion that the joint effects of Operation Storm, the coordinated activities of the army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and HVO (Croatian Defence Council) units, and the actions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) rapid reaction force against the Bosnian Serbs, coupled with diplomatic efforts, have finally opened the way to serious and comprehensive peace negotiations, which will eventually lead to a realistic, balanced and lasting solution to the crisis.

Croatia fully supports the current United States peace initiative and the increased decisiveness of the international community, manifested particularly by the United Nations and NATO rapid-reaction force operations and pressure against the Bosnian Serbs.

Croatia's major interest with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina is in achieving a lasting peace and just settlement of the conflict that would be satisfactory to the constituent peoples and that would ensure stability along Croatian borders; the survival, safety and dignified life of the Bosnian Croats; and mutually beneficial relations and cooperation between the two friendly neighbouring countries.

Therefore, Croatia strongly supports the implementation of the Washington Agreements and the Split Declaration and the strengthening of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its association with Croatia at various levels and in various areas of cooperation.

The prerequisites for lasting stability, security and cooperation in the region include a just and lasting solution to the crisis, reconstruction and development of the countries in the region, normalization of relations between all successor States of the former Yugoslavia on the basis of equal succession and introduction of a new regional order as an integral part of the new European security system.

It is Croatia's firm position that the solution for the peaceful reintegration of the remaining occupied territories of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem and the former United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) Sector East must be an integral part of the overall peaceful resolution of the crisis in the region, in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, within the time-frame of the current peace initiative and the expiration date of the UNCRO mandate. Without progress in the solution of this issue, progress in the settlement of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be envisaged, and neither can any real stabilization of the situation in south-eastern Europe.

Deeply committed to peaceful reintegration, Croatia is willing to immediately open meaningful and constructive talks with the representatives of the Serb population in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem that should lead to the re-establishment of Croatia's full sovereignty, the return of forcibly displaced persons to their homes and respect, in accordance with high European standards, for the minority rights of the Serbs and other minority ethnic or national communities — Slovak, Hungarian, Ukrainian and others — in this area.

To this end Croatia has already proposed to the local Serbs and the Government of the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia, through the good offices of the international mediators, a comprehensive, elaborate and concrete peace plan in the form of a draft agreement on the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem into the constitutional and economic system of the Republic of Croatia.

Implementation of the proposed agreement must begin with the immediate withdrawal of all military and paramilitary groups not originally from this region, to be followed by the disarming and disbanding, under UNCRO supervision, of the military and paramilitary groups composed of persons who reside in the area.

Upon signing the agreement on the peaceful reintegration of the remaining occupied areas, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia would recognize each other within their internationally recognized borders and diplomatic relations between these two States would be established at the ambassadorial level. This would be followed shortly by the reopening of the Zagreb-Belgrade highway and railways, the river traffic along the Danube and Sava rivers, the Adriatic pipeline's outlet to Serbia and telecommunications between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The proposed draft agreement provides ample evidence of Croatia's sincere will and disposition to find a negotiated and just solution to the reintegration of the remaining occupied territories, providing for the legitimate rights of Croatia as a sovereign State and of all its citizens, including its minorities. Along these lines, Croatia participated in the Contact Group negotiations in Geneva and New York. Following these negotiations, I am moderately optimistic that the resolution of the crisis and peace in the region can be achieved in the near future.

However, there is no doubt that progress towards a lasting, just and comprehensive peace is contingent on the continued, determined and coordinated efforts of the international community in the maintenance of a global approach to the current peace initiative and the continuation of the international sanctions against the Belgrade regime. In the next several weeks the parties and the international community have to work out a framework, in the form of a package, for the peace accord, which should include several interrelated steps: a solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina; a resolution of the issue of Eastern Slavonia leading to its reintegration into Croatia; mutual recognition, within their international borders, between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and changes in the sanctions regime against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as the international community deems appropriate. Upon the acceptance of such a plan, the road to lasting peace and stability will be opened.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to thank again all the countries contributing troops to the UNCRO operations in Croatia and underscore our appreciation of their efforts to aid the peace process. Croatia deeply regrets the loss of life and the injuries sustained by members of the United Nations force during their mission in Croatia. Their noble sacrifice will always be remembered and cherished by the Croatian people.

In the name of my Government, I am particularly proud to thank the General Assembly for having supported the cause of Croatia, most of all by adopting resolution 49/43, concerning the occupied territories of Croatia. I kindly ask the Assembly to remain steadfast in the contribution it has made through this important resolution and through the individual and collective engagement of most Members' Governments to the search for a just and lasting peace for Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as for the whole of south-eastern Europe.

The Acting President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, His Excellency Mr. Karolos Papoulias, on whom I now call.

Mr. Papoulias (Greece) *(spoke in Greek; English text furnished by the delegation):* Allow me at the outset to extend to the President of the General Assembly the warmest congratulations of the Greek Government on his election to the presidency at this historic fiftieth session, which is a well-deserved tribute to his personal qualities and his distinguished international career. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy for the highly constructive and efficient manner in which he performed his duties as President of the General Assembly during its forty-ninth session.

I wish to take this opportunity to address my sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who is striving with courage, energy, political will and vision for a new world in which law and ethics will prevail, and for the restructuring of the Organization, so that it may meet the challenges of our time. He has our full support in his efforts to fulfil his mission.

Let me also welcome Palau, the new Member that has been admitted to the United Nations this year. Its presence among us is a renewed expression of our Organization's desire to welcome in its midst all those States that undertake the commitment to adhere to the purposes and principles set out in the United Nations Charter.

The Foreign Minister of Spain, in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Union, delivered a statement earlier this week on behalf of the Union and its member States. My Government fully subscribes to the content of that statement and of the memorandum of the Union. I would like, however, to elaborate further on some issues which are of particular interest to my country.

This fiftieth session of the General Assembly provides us with an opportunity, not only for an annual exchange of views between the States Members of the United Nations on the state of international affairs, but also for the celebration of a milestone in the life of the Organization. This celebration should not, however, be just a token tribute to the great undertaking of 50 years ago. It is only natural that, on this occasion, Governments should endeavour to analyse the successes and failures of the United Nations over five decades, to ask themselves whether we have come closer to fulfilling, in the practice of international relations, the principles proclaimed in the Charter, and to look to the years ahead in order to try to chart our new priorities in a rapidly changing world.

This Organization was brought into being by the vision, the hope and the determination of men and women who experienced at first hand the lethal dangers of nationalism, economic depression, lost freedom and devastating war — men and women who realized the need to create mechanisms that would allow States to embark upon a collective effort in dealing with a wide range of complex international issues.

Looking back over the 50 years since the guns of the Second World War fell silent, one notes with satisfaction the valuable work performed by the United Nations as a forum for debate on matters of international concern, and as a centre for harmonizing the activities of States in the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian fields.

The United Nations has played a vital role as a framework for the historical process of decolonization, by securing international recognition for the new countries and by helping them improve their economic and social conditions. It has defined human rights for the global community. It has defeated the shameful practice of apartheid. It has provided the basis for an intensive development of international law. It has monitored elections in countries where elections have seldom been held. It has assisted in the drafting of constitutions, and has trained indigenous police forces. It has moved forward consensus on global problems such as disarmament, the environment, the status of women, human rights, development and many other fundamental issues.

Furthermore, the specialized agencies of the United Nations system have achieved major successes in their different spheres of activity, and have provided invaluable humanitarian and other assistance in distressed areas of the world.

Despite this creditable record, it is the shortcomings of the United Nations that receive the greatest attention. I will certainly not argue that the achievements of those past 50 years yield any ground whatsoever for complacency. However, while disappointment has been frequently expressed at the Organization's performance, no credible alternative is offered by those who criticize it. Moreover, little regard is given to the innumerable constraints under which it operates, as well as to the fact that it can be only as effective as Governments allow it to be. The United Nations has indeed structural deficiencies, which it urgently needs to overcome. But it is too often a useful scapegoat for the mistakes, the failings and the unfulfilled promises of Member States.

The Secretary-General, in his highly acclaimed and very timely report entitled "Supplement to an 'Agenda for Peace'", issued earlier this year, has underlined the great problems presented to the United Nations by the new generation of post-cold-war conflicts, for which the Organization was obviously unprepared. He has pointed out that, for instance, in the framework of its peace-keeping activities, the Organization has had, in some cases, to juggle efforts to combine mandates, including the use of force under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the basic principle of neutrality and impartiality of the United Nations and the lack of adequate resources to effectively implement that mandate. In the same context, shortcomings in the unity of command which we have witnessed in the case of some peace-keeping operations have also contributed to undermining the effectiveness of United Nations action.

The financial crisis in general has also been particularly debilitating as regards the activities of the Organization in all areas. The Secretary-General has

often questioned the credibility of those Member States that support the ends, by actively participating in the decision-making process, but not the means, by failing to pay their assessed contribution. Nobody denies the fact that considerable progress can still be achieved with regard to the effective use of resources that are already available. But unless the necessary financial means are provided, it would be folly to expect miracles from the Organization. Eliminating waste and inefficiency, through better management and accountability, essential though it may be, will never be a substitute for ensuring adequate and regular funding.

The increasing resort to, and use, of sanctions regimes has brought to light another series of difficulties which have also undermined the credibility of the United Nations. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, the objectives for which specific sanctions regimes were imposed and the criteria for their lifting have not been clearly defined, or have seemed to change over time, as has been the case for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Iraq. This situation is all the more worrying because experience has proved that the imposition of sanctions results in the infliction of tremendous suffering upon vulnerable groups of the targeted country, rather than in the modification of the behaviour of its Government.

Furthermore, the role of those countries that shoulder the main burden of the implementation of the sanctions regimes, despite the considerable collateral damage which they suffer in terms of economic and social costs, needs, at last, to be appropriately acknowledged, for their contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security is, in some cases, no less important than that of troop-contributing countries. It should be clear that if, in the long run, the difficulties of those Member States that have the misfortune to be neighbours of the targeted countries are not dealt with in a satisfactory way, *inter alia*, through the appropriate implementation of Article 50 of the Charter, then general support for the use of sanctions as an effective instrument will not be easily maintained.

Regrettably, one would have to acknowledge that the primary purpose of the United Nations — that of establishing a pattern of world order and international security — has been achieved to a much lesser degree than had been expected, or is indeed required by the growing needs of the international community. The threat and the use of force are still a recurrent feature of international relations, contrary to the expectations raised in 1945. The territorial integrity or the sovereign rights of States are frequently threatened or compromised by the practice of power politics, in contravention of the purposes and principles that govern our Organization.

In this context, allow me to observe that a charter is of value in so far as each member that subscribes to it conducts itself in accordance with the commitments it has undertaken of its own free will, without guile or reservations. It is also of paramount importance that the United Nations should not be perceived as resorting to double standards when it comes to military aggression and other blatant violations of international law.

The guiding principle of Greek foreign policy is the establishment of good-neighbourly relations with all countries of the region, on the basis of respect for international law, national sovereignty and human rights, and on non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. This principle has always constituted the cornerstone of our foreign policy and applies fully to our relations with neighbouring Turkey. It is the sincere wish of my Government that Greek-Turkish relations be normalized, on the basis of the principles of international law and the relevant international treaties, and in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Document and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Greece has never raised any claims against Turkey. On the other hand, we have made it absolutely clear that we categorically reject any idea of compromising our sovereign rights, which we are determined to protect by all legitimate means.

Unfortunately, Turkey is following a different approach in its policies *vis-à-vis* our country. To cite just one example, I wish to refer to the resolution adopted on 8 June 1995 by the Turkish National Assembly, authorizing the Turkish Government to use military force in case Greece exercised its legal right to expand its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The said resolution was obviously endorsed by the Turkish Government, since it was forwarded to the Secretary-General on 23 June 1995 in a letter addressed to him by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations.

Turkey is in fact attempting to intimidate Greece into forfeiting a right acknowledged to all signatory parties, by article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, and already exercised by a large number of States. Furthermore, it is beyond any

doubt that the above-mentioned resolution constitutes a direct violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that

> "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State",

as well as of many similar provisions of international treaties and conventions.

It is self-evident that an essential improvement of Greek-Turkish relations presupposes a just and lasting solution of the Cyprus question and the re-establishment of international legality in Cyprus. Unfortunately, during the last 21 years, the Turkish forces, defying a series of United Nations resolutions, have occupied a large part of Cyprus, despite the assiduous efforts of the Secretary-General. Their continuing presence has resulted in the division of the island by force, the brutal violation of human rights and freedoms, and the systematic plundering of the island's cultural and religious heritage.

The Greek Government strongly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General with a view to a just and viable solution of the Cyprus problem, on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the most recent one, resolution 939 (1994), which calls for a bi-communal and bi-zonal federal State of Cyprus with single sovereignty and international personality and single citizenship, with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded. The Greek Government believes that the prospect of the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, which was further promoted by concrete actions taken by the Union in the course of 1995, will create conditions that would make it possible to tackle the current deadlock and, thus, assist effectively the Secretary-General's efforts for the reversal of the unacceptable status quo.

One should also bear in mind that no progress towards a settlement is possible as long as the Turkish occupation forces remain on the island. The Greek Government considers the proposal for the total demilitarization of the island, put forward by President Clerides, as most constructive. It also feels that it is imperative that countries which are in a position to back the efforts of the Secretary-General and wish to do so should exert the necessary pressure so that the side which is responsible for the impasse will be forced to abide by international law and United Nations resolutions.

The signing of the Interim Accord, on 13 September 1995, in New York, constitutes an important step towards establishing a new era in relations between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It also paves the way for bilateral cooperation for their own benefit, as well as for the sake of peace, cooperation, stability and prosperity throughout the Balkans, which has been so affected by the crisis in the former Yugoslavia.

We do hope that this preliminary significant step in the relations between the two countries will lead to a definite settlement of the dispute over the name, which constitutes the main difference existing between them and which will be dealt with in the context of further negotiations, in accordance with the conventional commitment of the parties concerned and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Greece attaches great importance to its relations with Albania. For this reason, we constantly follow a policy of good- neighbourliness and cooperation with that country and continue to support, in many ways, its efforts to promote political and economic reforms and thus contribute to the establishment of a modern and democratic society.

Greece has been offering substantial economic support to Albania, which has enabled it to face the many difficult problems that arose after the former regime was overthrown. Today, Greek investments in Albania continue to contribute substantially to the country's economic development and to the strengthening of its social stability.

Furthermore, a large Greek minority lives in Albania, contributing positively to the country's development. Under the previous regime, this minority was subjected to persecution and harsh treatment. Greece is convinced that the Greek minority in Albania constitutes a bridge of friendship between the two countries and helps further their rapprochement and cooperation. For this reason, we believe that the human rights of the members of that minority should be fully respected, so that they are able to stay in their homeland and live there in a safe environment. Moreover, they should be proportionally represented in the administration, the State institutions and the armed forces, and be allowed to exercise their religious and educational rights freely and fully.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding some improvements, considerable restrictions continue to apply to the free

exercise of these rights, particularly in the field of education. We sincerely hope that the Albanian Government, in conformity also with its international commitments, will secure full respect for the human rights of the Greek minority.

During the current year, the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia has continued to unfold relentlessly, imposing tremendous suffering and hardships on the civilian population. Greece, as a country neighbouring the former Yugoslavia, has been directly subjected to the negative consequences of this bloody conflict, as regards both its economy and its security.

My country has always advocated that, as has already been pointed out by the presidency of the European Union, a fair and viable solution to the conflict in Bosnia can be found only by political means, and not on the battlefields. This is why from the beginning of the crisis we have spared no effort to ensure that all the parties involved moved in the direction of trying to promote a peaceful settlement, in cooperation with our European partners and Russia, which has played, and is to play, a significant role in this issue. Furthermore, the Greek Government fully supports the current diplomatic initiative and the ongoing negotiating process based on the Contact Group plan.

Recently, there have been encouraging developments regarding the future shape of things in the former Yugoslavia. The parties have begun to show signs of rapprochement and willingness to talk. Thus, we warmly welcome the Basic Principles, agreed in Geneva on 8 September 1995, and the Further Basic Principles, agreed three days ago in New York, which are very important steps on the long and difficult road to peace. Much remains to be done, but if the parties display the necessary political will and with the assistance of the international community a comprehensive and viable peaceful settlement should no longer be a fictitious objective, whose attainment would take a very long time.

Greece, for its part, is ready to contribute to the fulfilment of this objective through the good relations that it has developed with all the parties involved in the conflict. Furthermore, my country, fully aware of the intricacies of the Balkans and having actively participated in the initiatives for regional economic cooperation, will do its utmost, both on a national basis and in the framework of the European Union, to promote efforts aiming at the reconstruction of the former Yugoslavia.

Concerning the situation in the Middle East, Greece considers as a matter of utmost importance the early and unimpeded implementation of the recent Erez and Taba Agreements and the speedy conclusion of the talks on redeployment and elections, together with the solution of the two outstanding problems, namely security for all, and social and economic development.

We welcome the signature yesterday in Washington by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of the interim agreement on the second stage of Palestinian autonomy, which constitutes additional proof of determination and political courage. We congratulate the Israeli Government and Chairman Arafat on their commitment to peace.

Greece believes that the international community must exert consistent efforts, in which we are willing to actively participate, aiming at the creation of a solid basis for the political and economic survival of the Palestinian National Authority, thereby providing a source of hope for the Palestinian people.

Greece is of the view that the peace process could be substantially promoted if the States of the region directly involved in it joined forces with those actively participating, and we welcome all recent indications to this effect. The peoples of the region should be guaranteed a secure life, within internationally recognized and safe boundaries.

We urge the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) on Lebanon.

Greece, which has actively participated in the Middle East peace process since it began in Madrid, will continue to offer full support and assistance to the bilateral and multilateral negotiations towards a comprehensive, final and just peace.

Greece believes that an increase in the number of members of the Security Council has become an imperative necessity. Such an increase, which should be moderate so as not to undermine the effectiveness of the Council's action, must reflect the current number of States that are Members of the United Nations, the realities of the new international situation and an equitable distribution among all existing regional groups. While recognizing that any formal definition of criteria for new permanent members could not be easily formulated, we consider that new members of this category should be selected from among States that exert

a major influence in world affairs and are in a position to make an essential contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Greece welcomes the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the commitment made by the States parties to its universalization and full implementation. We emphasize the importance of strengthening the review process and adopting a set of principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament. We also stress the need to complete without delay comprehensive and verifiable treaties to ban nuclear-weapon tests and to cut off the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

We are deeply concerned at the continued dangers posed by the excessive transfer of conventional arms, and we support putting the United Nations Register fully into effect. Furthermore, the continuing injuries to civilians caused by anti-personnel mines demonstrate the need to strengthen multilateral controls in this regard.

Growing economic and social gaps breed violence. The need to bridge the differences between rich and poor, both between nations and within nations, is of the utmost importance for our efforts and opportunities to preserve peace. This fundamental truth was recognized and stressed by the founders of the United Nations and, subsequently, by all members of the Organization, who pledged to "employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples".

In responding to the changing needs of the increasingly interdependent world economy, we have to reinforce the coherence and effectiveness of the competent international institutions and to complete without delay our consideration of the "Agenda for Development", thus setting out a new impetus to international cooperation in this field and defining the particular contribution expected of the United Nations system.

There is an increasing realization worldwide that in major denials of human rights, which breed antagonisms and deep resentments, there lie the seeds of international discord as surely as in the clashes of economic rivalries and territorial ambitions. In this regard, Greece strongly condemns all forms of discrimination and intolerance, and reaffirms its full support for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and his coordinating role throughout the United Nations system, as well as for the strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights. The principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and also those of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as of the other international acts and instruments, should guide the actions of all Member States in this respect on a daily basis.

Industrialization and the technological revolution, while bringing benefits to the human race, have also given rise to side effects, namely the problems of the devastation of the natural environment. In this context, the importance of meeting the commitments we made at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, and the need to review and strengthen them, where appropriate, cannot be overstressed. Strengthening national institutions responsible for environmental management, and supporting international organizations that focus on environmental issues, will be vital in maintaining and increasing the momentum for the protection and the improvement of the environment.

Troops and civilian personnel engaged in United Nations peace-keeping and humanitarian activities have been carrying out their most important tasks under conditions of extraordinary personal risk, and very often at the expense of their own lives. I would like to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the abhorrent and unacceptable harassment of and attacks against United Nations peace-keepers, to whose relentless courage and determination we pay tribute. I should also like to stress the need for measures which will ensure their security, including the early entry into force of the recently adopted Convention for the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

These past 50 years of United Nations existence have been a time of unparalleled human advancement and of the fundamental enlargement of human expectations. As I see it, it will be the principal task of the Organization, which has done so much to give voice to those expectations, to take the lead in bringing them ever closer to realization.

Greece, as a small country, has always had a strong vested interest in the strengthening of the common capacity to deal with threats to international peace and security and, in general, in the success of the United Nations. The Greek people will always be supportive of a collective approach to global and regional problems. For my part, I can only reaffirm our resolve to extend our full cooperation to the efforts of the Organization as it strives for the realization of its noble objectives, and our continued dedication to its purposes and principles.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic):* I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Bolivia, His Excellency Mr. Antonio Aranibar Quiroga.

Mr. Aranibar Quiroga (Bolivia) *(interpretation from Spanish):* Allow me to convey to the President of the General Assembly the congratulations of the Government and people of Bolivia upon his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. He can be assured that my delegation will cooperate with him to ensure the full success of this important session.

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Charter affords a fresh opportunity for critical and renewed reflection on the scope, difficulties and role of the multilateral system.

During the year 1995 important meetings of universal scope have taken place, such as the World Summit on Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Review and Extension Conference on the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Those meetings, together with others of a bilateral, subregional or regional character — notably the Hemispheric Summit in Miami — show that the principles which presided over the creation of the United Nations are still very much alive, and demonstrate the need to make significant further headway in promoting peace, human rights, democracy, and economic and social development.

Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Meetings at the highest level of the world's political leaders and their representatives, ready to assume undertakings on issues of such significance, are indicative of a strong political will and reveal an interest in finding concrete collective responses to the problems of our time.

As a result of those Conferences, the world community has at hand new approaches that enrich and strengthen prior agreements as it seeks to cope successfully with contemporary challenges. For example, social development and recognition of the due role of women in society have ceased to be mere promises; they are becoming definite realities before the end of this century.

The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People will make it possible for priority attention to be given to that important sector of the community.

The end of the cold war has not released the material and human resources that were committed to that contest. Nor has it freed our minds of concern over war and destruction. There persist negative situations and prejudices, which were born during that period when the world was divided into antagonistic blocs, and which no longer have any justification.

The long-awaited peace dividend has not been forthcoming; on the contrary, we see a proliferation of conflicts in many parts of the world. Many of these situations are due to still unresolved social and national problems, to a backlog of injustices and long-standing resentments, to geopolitical and economic interests which, from within and from outside, have exacerbated confrontation for decades, and, above all, to Governments' difficulties in defining an effective form of cooperation for the peaceful solution of problems.

In this context, we reiterate our support for the principles and the renewed objectives of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, whose chairmanship is shortly to be assumed by the sister republic of Colombia.

We feel a sense of solidarity with the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, who are enduring the torment of an unjustifiable war. We also express our solidarity with the millions of human beings affected by military conflict, unilateral blockades, hindrances to free contact with the outside world, and by having been uprooted from their lands.

We reiterate what the Heads of State or Government of the Rio Group stated at their recent summit meeting in Quito:

> "We express our concern over attempts to enforce domestic laws beyond territorial boundaries in violation of international law and the fundamental principles governing coexistence in the region. Such actions violate the sovereignty of other States and are contrary to unanimously adopted transparent trade practices". (*A/50/425, annex, para. 13*)

Bolivia expresses its condemnation of grave violations of international law, war crimes, violations of the fundamental rules of coexistence, manifestations of racism, and other offenses against humanity, all of which should be vigorously condemned. The work of the United Nations in this field has been important, but it needs to be further refined. In that work, the role of regional and subregional organizations for cooperation and

coordination is essential and should gain greater importance in years to come. These organizations include the Organization of American States, the Rio Group and the various regional and subregional instruments of economic integration, to which my Government lends its full support.

We rejoice that Haiti and other countries have made firm strides towards peace and democratic governance.

Likewise, Bolivia notes with particular interest, and commends, the peace process in the Middle East, whose advances in the face of difficulties give us cause to be optimistic and to hope for reconciliation through the fashioning of innovative solutions with a distinctive explicit political content. The agreement signed yesterday between Israel and Palestine is an example of determination and vision of historic proportions.

Bolivia has expressed its rejection of the resumption of nuclear tests, which jeopardize negotiations towards the speedy adoption of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

We condemn terrorism and organized crime, whose scope and reach cut across national boundaries and which thus threatens security and constitutional stability everywhere. Bolivia has signed several bilateral treaties intended to advance international cooperation on legal matters within a framework of strict respect for sovereignty, but at the same time closing off avenues to impunity for international crime.

As our awareness of the rights and duties of multilateral interdependence grows, cooperation in achieving the inherent right to development of all the world's peoples should come to the fore.

In the new international situation, Bolivia supports initiatives aimed at strengthening the United Nations and shares the conviction that it is necessary to carry out major reforms in its structure and functioning. Bolivia believes it essential as a first step in that direction to strengthen the General Assembly as the principal organ providing for effective participation by all countries.

My Government supports initiatives aimed at expanding the Security Council, in both its permanent and its non-permanent membership. Such an expansion should reflect the diversity of the world's regions and enable all States to participate effectively and responsibly in the commitment to guarantee peace, security and the timely settlement of conflicts, in a transparent manner and in keeping with the interests of the international community, not only in the narrow framework of the individual interests of States.

I also highlight the importance we attach to the United Nations in the area of international cooperation, especially in the economic sphere and on matters of social and technological development, and the urgency of restoring to the Economic and Social Council the high stature it originally possessed.

The principles of justice and international law must be our main guiding light in seeking solutions to the problems we face.

With regard to Bolivia's maritime question, which we have brought before international forums, I wish to declare to this Assembly the political will of my Government to embark upon negotiations that are consonant with our historic responsibility, that serve the rights and interests of all parties involved, and that ensure a sovereign Bolivian presence on the Pacific Ocean. Bolivia has to contend with the consequences of the land-locked position imposed upon it, the economic, political and moral effects of which demand a solution in the framework of international solidarity, justice, equity and law.

Just as countries call for international justice, we are obliged also to apply that principle within our own societies. That is the golden rule of the Administration of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada. Our message is one of change. Never before in the history of our republic have such profound and rapid structural changes been democratically and peacefully carried out as those that began in Bolivia in August 1993.

First, we are implementing the law on the people's participation, which is integrating civil society into the political system. Traditionally disadvantaged populations now have in their hands the ability to diagnose their problems and to prescribe public policy, especially regarding self-help to meet their own needs. This is essentially a policy of redistribution, which enables a large part of the nation fully to assume their status as citizens.

Secondly, the foregoing requires training the people so that they will be able to meet internal and external challenges. To that end, another reform undertaken by President Gonzálo Sánchez de Lozada's administration is educational reform, viewed specifically in the light of

Bolivia's ethnic and cultural diversity and with the aim of institutionalizing bilingual and multicultural education.

Thirdly, I am pleased to inform this Assembly that capital investment in Bolivia's main public enterprises is moving forward successfully and strongly. We are transforming the largest productive and service units of the country to enable them to double their capital in the space of a few months, modernize their management in accordance with the requirements of international life, and secure a series of real benefits for the Bolivian population, making possible individual investment by citizens of 50 per cent of the share capital.

Such initiatives represent an effort to make Bolivia equal to contemporary demands, especially those resulting from the international economy, which is characterized by great dynamism, innovation and competitiveness.

International economic cooperation is indispensable and should enjoy the firm political backing of developed countries and international financial institutions. For that reason my country expresses concern about the declining and negative trends of some sources of cooperation and financing. This situation is especially disturbing when seen in the light of the fact that Bolivia has to contend in its territory with a universal problem — namely, illicit drug trafficking.

It is paradoxical — to say the least — to urge an increase in Bolivia's contribution and in Bolivia's tasks in that common struggle precisely at a time when cooperation resources are decreasing. The task at hand is simultaneously to fulfil the commitments in the struggle against drug trafficking and to prepare to embark on genuine sustainable development, especially in the rural sector, where the most acute poverty exists.

Given the magnitude of the tasks falling to Bolivia in this matter, strong backing from the international community is needed for Bolivia's national strategy in regard to interdiction, prevention, the eradication of surplus crops, and alternative development. That contribution is essential to Bolivia's effort to cease being a link in the drug-trafficking chain and, at the same time, ensure political and economic stability and promote development of the country's productive apparatus.

With a view to consolidating the vision of shared responsibility with regard to the problem of drug-trafficking, the nations of the Americas support the holding of a world conference to take stock of the situation and the state of international cooperation in the struggle against demand for and production, sale, trafficking and illicit distribution of narcotics. In that context, Bolivia actively advocates the holding in 1977 of a second international conference against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, under the aegis of the United Nations.

Before concluding, I must refer to the topic of sustainable development.

We must stimulate vigorous and sustained economic growth, with social equity, in conditions that protect and make efficient use of natural resources and ensure rational distribution of the fruits of that growth. Henceforth, we must adopt a mode of development that is nurtured by technological advances designed to curb the waste and pollution that have characterized industrialized societies.

Accordingly, it is with special satisfaction that I announce to this Assembly that in the latter half of next year Bolivia will have the privilege of hosting, in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the American Hemispheric Summit on Sustainable Development. We hope that the ideas and proposals that emerge from that important meeting will contribute to the development of our countries and to better preservation of the environment in this part of the world.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Samoa, His Excellency Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi.

Mr. Malielegaoi (Samoa): I have to confess to my usual excitement and pleasure at addressing the General Assembly, exceptionally crowded and patient even at this late hour.

Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. Mr. Freito do Amaral represents a country with a long history of global achievements. With his personal qualities and experience, he is a very natural choice to guide the work of this Assembly at such a critical moment.

Let me also pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for his dedicated and distinguished stewardship during the last session of the General Assembly.

I want also to record the gratitude of my Government to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the measure and quality of the leadership that he continues to provide in the direction and work of the Organization.

Barely three weeks ago Hurricane Luis wrought devastation on several island countries in the Caribbean, causing major setbacks to economic and sustainable development, as well as the loss of lives. As we ourselves recently experienced two similar disasters, our thoughts and sympathy are with the people of the Caribbean nations devastated by Hurricane Luis, and we pray for their speedy recovery.

The President of the General Assembly, in his opening remarks, reminded us of the scope of the membership and the universal character of this Organization. Samoa is proud to note that a sister nation of the Pacific, the Republic of Palau, is the newest Member of the United Nations, and I am delighted to extend to Palau the warmest of welcomes. Two weeks ago the Republic of Palau was acclaimed to membership — becoming the sixteenth member — of the South Pacific Forum. That too was a moment of great pride for all of us.

We come together at a special moment for this Organization and in the history of international cooperation. Undeniably, this is a session of exceptional importance. We need to take stock of where we, the United Nations, are and to set new goals and priorities for the future.

Samoa believes that any stocktaking must be rooted in the Charter, which proclaims the purposes and principles of the Organization. Regrettably, the Charter pledges that we have made to succeeding generations remain largely unfulfilled.

It is right, and it is natural, therefore that at this fiftieth session, we, the peoples of the United Nations, should seek to renew our commitment to those pledges. But first, it must be remembered that they are pledges that carry the attendant duty — a most sacred duty — to make them realities. It is a duty imposed upon us all and accepted upon membership in our Organization. Far too often, this is forgotten, or seemingly ignored.

This session will also be the natural occasion on which to reaffirm our support for, and our faith in, the United Nations. I speak positively and unhesitatingly about reaffirmation because, quite frankly, what else is there to take the place of the United Nations?

What we have is certainly not perfect. And given its almost universal make-up, the range of issues before it and the increasing demands being made of the United Nations, it would be surprising if this were the case. Indeed, in recent years, all of us in this Assembly have been engaged in various activities aimed at making the United Nations more relevant, more efficient and more cost-effective and at preparing the Organization for the twenty-first century. We welcome in particular resolution 49/252, which was recently adopted, on strengthening of the United Nations system, and we look forward to taking part in the discussions in the Open-ended High-level Working Group established. If and when we have devised changes and improvements in the United Nations system, I dare say that in years to come it will be necessary to persist in monitoring and putting into place further needed reforms to ensure the sustaining vigour of the Organization. That being the case, there is clearly room for criticism and fault-finding, from among ourselves as well as from those who look on. We do not however think the shortcomings of the United Nations warrant uninformed cynicism and unfair blame, nor the charge of irrelevance that is sometimes levelled at it.

But clearly, the standing and the very role of the United Nations is at risk if the Members continue to deny the Organization the funds and resources it needs. The Secretary-General has spoken of this matter time and again, and once more in his report on the work of the Organization (A/50/1). The Organization is in a most critical financial state, but it is also clear that the situation can be substantially improved with the early payment of arrears and by the full and timely payment of assessed contributions. We can only urge the most immediate action on the part of those who know they must act.

Samoa is a small and least-developed country. We are deeply committed to the United Nations, and we will continue to meet our financial and other responsibilities, notwithstanding the budgetary problems we face. We share the view that the strongest measures must be taken to achieve sound financial viability for this Organization. It would be essential for this purpose that there be a fair, more equitable and realistic scale of assessments, one which would take full account of the principle of capacity to pay.

This must also take into account the predicament of some countries, including my own, which are assessed at the floor rate of the scale, at levels far beyond their capacity to pay. We believe there is a just case for abolishing or reducing the current floor rate. This is a

matter of importance to many small States and we would hope that the High-level Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations would continue to give it due consideration.

There is a second aspect, which touches on the emphasis now being given to United Nations peace-keeping activities. While Samoa recognizes the necessary and traditional role of the United Nations in promoting global peace and security, it seems to us that ultimately no amount of force and no measure of peace-keeping can sustain peace and security without attention to the root causes. Our own view is that human misery brought about by poverty and the denial of human and democratic rights are often the real and fundamental problems. Unless these are removed or minimized, there can never be the substratum that we need for lasting world peace and security.

Put simply, Samoa believes firmly that social and economic development must remain a major preoccupation of the United Nations, as pledged in the Charter. Development priorities spelt out in recent global conferences for the sustained economic and social advancement of the developing countries should be effectively implemented. They should not be ignored while the Organization's attention and its focus, in terms of human and financial resources, is diverted elsewhere, largely on peace-keeping activities.

For Samoa and other small island States disadvantaged by their size and geographical location, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development on Small Island Developing States must remain a centrepiece of our attention.

We welcome steps taken by the various organs of the United Nations system to implement the Plan of Action. We appreciate, in particular, what is being done by the Department for Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development and the Unit set up to monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action. These steps will complement efforts undertaken by our regional countries in the South Pacific region to further advance the commitments made in Rio, Barbados and elsewhere.

Samoa's commitment to the pursuit of global peace and security is unwavering. We will continue to do what we can. Conflicts which continue to rage in many regions of the world today cannot be ignored. They affect us all, for they impact directly or indirectly on the ability of the United Nations and the international community to respond to the development needs of others.

We welcome the latest initiatives with a view to bringing a peaceful end to the conflict in Bosnia. A settlement acceptable to all parties must be reached.

Another milestone in the Middle East peace process was reached in Washington yesterday. With the rest of the world, we celebrate and commend the enduring efforts and commitments made by the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to lasting peace and security for all in that region.

Our environment is of vital importance, and of singular concern to my Government. Our actions in the region and at the international level are dictated by a deep commitment to preserving it. Together with other countries in our region, we have initiated and concluded a series of treaty regimes, including those designed to protect the natural resources and environment of the South Pacific region and to establish the South Pacific nuclear-free zone to keep our region free of environmental pollution by radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter.

We will continue to supplement these efforts as the need arises. Indeed, leaders at the recent South Pacific Forum meeting in Papua New Guinea adopted the Treaty on the Control and Movement of Hazardous and Toxic Wastes in the South Pacific. Samoa did not hesitate to sign it.

Consistently over the years Samoa, together with our regional partners, has called for a permanent end to nuclear testing, the dumping of chemical and toxic wastes and the transportation of these materials in our waters.

From this account you will therefore understand our deep shock and distress when it was announced in June that France proposed to resume the testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific. We sought, at the highest level, as many others did, to persuade the Government of France not to do so. We took action to register our concern and to protest and we sought to intervene in the proceedings brought by New Zealand against France in the International Court of Justice. Together with other Forum countries we moved to make direct representation to the Government of France — all to no avail.

The explosion of a nuclear device at Mururoa atoll early this month brings to close to 200 the number of underground nuclear tests France has carried out in the Pacific since 1975. Of the whole United Nations membership, Samoa is the closest to the test site.

The resumption of nuclear testing by France has been made in the face of strong and persistent protest from countries of the region, and equally strong and overwhelming condemnation from all parts of the world. The current tests are being conducted in the absence of any environmental impact assessments that we know of or have been advised of, and in the opinion of my Government in disregard of France's existing regional treaty obligations. Like other members of the South Pacific Forum, Samoa is outraged at the resumption of French nuclear testing in the Pacific — and, as I say, in the vicinity of my country. In the strongest possible terms we condemn it. We do so because of the extreme danger it poses to our environment and health, now and in the long term; and because the tests are completely contrary to the undertaking at the recent Non-Proliferation Treaty review Conference that nuclear States exercise utmost restraint in nuclear testing pending the completion of negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would ban nuclear tests for all time.

We do welcome France's commitment to a comprehensive test-ban treaty, but that should not be used as an excuse for France to continue its nuclear testing in our region. For the sake of our environment and all who live there, we call on France to stop.

We call also, and once more, on the three nuclear Powers which have not yet signed and ratified the Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty to do so.

It is also out of deep concern for our environment that Samoa has taken every step possible to be engaged in the negotiations and in the implementation of the international conventions relating to climate change, biodiversity, marine pollution and the conservation of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. Global warming and the threat of sea-level rise are matters of the gravest concern to my country and our region. Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that the warming of the global atmosphere is unlikely to be entirely due to natural causes. In other words, human activity is a definite cause that cannot be discounted.

While this is not entirely unexpected, the latest indication from the IPCC bears out the inadequacy of current Convention commitments for Annex I parties, and underlines the essential correctness, and the urgency, of the Berlin Mandate issued from the first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. For its part, Samoa will continue to work together with countries of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) towards the early acceptance of clear emission-reduction targets of the type advanced in the draft AOSIS Protocol.

In respect of fish stocks, let me take the opportunity to pay tribute to all the countries that worked so hard to produce the truly remarkable triumph in the form of the draft Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. In particular, we express our gratitude to Ambassador Satya Nandan of Fiji for his exceptional skill and chairmanship.

This has been a landmark year on many counts; with the fiftieth anniversary commemoration we will celebrate next month the crowning event.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, is one such landmark. Samoa warmly applauds the unanimous adoption of the Platform for Action, and the remarkable degree of international consultation and cooperation that was employed to produce it. What is needed now is the highest degree of commitment and action, in close consultation with women at all levels. There would be little point in having yet another fine document without any prospect of implementation, and without the effort and the will to make concrete changes and improvements. And let it be remembered that such changes and improvements are not for women alone, but for the full development of mankind.

Without doubt, the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was a major achievement for the world community this year. We congratulate Ambassador Dhanapala of Sri Lanka on his remarkable role and leadership in ensuring the successful outcome of the Review Conference.

The decisions we took then are essential to international peace and security, and the attainment of the ultimate goals of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The successful conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty by 1996 is a specific goal for the attainment of which all Member States of this body should strive with the utmost effort.

We pray that at the end of the presidency of Ambassador Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, the world

community will be able to celebrate the accomplishment of that objective.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Rodrigo Pardo Garcia-Peña.

Mr. Pardo Garcia-Peña (Colombia)(*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of my Government I congratulate Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, a crucial time in the history of the Organization. I should like at the outset to express our full readiness to make a major contribution to the success of the deliberations under his leadership.

I should also like to express our appreciation and gratitude to Minister Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire for his excellent performance as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

The peoples of the world believed that the end of the cold war would bring peace and prosperity — and they are still waiting. Indeed the changes that have taken place in international relations have not been accompanied by changes of a similar magnitude in the relations between the industrialized North and the impoverished South. On the contrary, the situation of developing countries, far from having improved, is deteriorating further. The international trade system does not meet the expectations that there would be access to markets and transparency in the rules of the game. Poverty has not been reduced, social development is at a standstill, the scientific and technological development of the South continues to lag and the external debt problem is still a heavy burden on our economies.

It is our duty now to realize the dream of those who wrote the San Francisco Charter — something that has been postponed for 50 years by a cold war and dozens of regional conflicts and overshadowed by the grief of the victims of armed conflicts.

The period of transition through which the international system is passing should not lead us to accept so-called unilateral solutions to problems that are global in nature nor to permit the emergence of a new era of intervention in matters that lie within the domestic jurisdiction of States. There is an imperative need to concert policies and coordinate strategies to face international problems and to foster constructive links between North and South.

The United Nations, which was a stage for the cold war, must now cooperate in eradicating poverty, in making sustainable human development viable, in guaranteeing equality of rights between men and women and in giving full effect to human rights — in other words, it must work on behalf of human beings — all human beings — without distinction of any kind whatsoever. The United Nations has the responsibility to strive to make the hopes and expectations that arose at the end of the cold war a reality and not the source of new frustrations.

The current situation requires a modern United Nations attuned to the new times, a pluralistic and democratic Organization that will be an instrument for the promotion of a world order that can make the right to development a reality and achieve peace. The building of a new international system to replace the hegemonic, weapons-based and unilateral practices of the past is a goal towards which we must work from within this Organization.

The international system we aspire to create is one compatible with interdependence and autonomy, with the strengthening of the international organization and with full respect for the sovereign equality of States, one compatible with economic development and devoted to the significant improvement of the living conditions of the poorest segments of the population.

It is indispensable to forge a new economic model that can satisfy the needs of our people, one characterized by social justice and equity, efficiency and competitiveness. At the same time, we are convinced that genuine and representative democracy, free from foreign interference, must be the key element in preserving peace and observing the basic principles of respect for the fundamental rights of the human person and of economic and social development.

For the preservation of peace, security and international stability it is indispensable that the nuclear-weapon States act responsibly and immediately discontinue nuclear testing. In this regard, we deplore the recent nuclear tests that have been carried out, notwithstanding the opposition of the international community to that practice.

Next month the Eleventh Summit Meeting of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries will take place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. My country looks forward to the attendance of leaders of developing nations and is prepared to shoulder the creative challenge of presiding over the Movement for the next three years.

In recent decades, under the leadership of His Excellency President Soeharto of Indonesia, the Non-Aligned Movement adopted a new course, one in tune with current reality, abandoning the confrontational context in favour of cooperation as the central focus of its action. We shall continue to pursue that task with enthusiasm.

With the same determination with which it succeeded in its struggle against colonialism, the non-aligned countries must now face the challenge of eradicating poverty and closing the vast gap between rich and poor and between developed and developing countries.

In the twenty-first century non-alignment will mean a commitment to peace and to the well-being and progress of our peoples, as well as action against poverty and marginalization. It will also entail a commitment to cooperation in dealing with global problems and a struggle for participation and against unilateralism and imposition.

In facing the next century, non-alignment must participate actively in the reform of international institutions, including the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. Non-alignment must also promote the needed changes in the structures of cooperation and the dynamic modalities by which developed countries and international institutions provide resources for the implementation of projects and programmes of South-South cooperation.

One of the global problems that calls for an effective multilateral strategy headed by the United Nations is that of illegal drugs. This is not an issue that can be dealt with by a single country or small group of nations. This is a transnational crime of vast proportions, overwhelming dimensions and the greatest perils. It is a crime without nationality.

We Colombians have suffered more than anyone from the devastating effects of this problem. We have suffered death and corruption as a consequence of the huge profits to be derived from this illegal activity. We find it surprising, therefore, to note that the international community is not fully aware of the real nature and dimensions of the problem of illicit drugs.

We are dealing with an illegal economic activity with dimensions that have been compared with those of the oil industry. It is seven or eight times greater than the gross national product of a nation like Colombia; it operates in dozens of countries and entails a number of linked activities, including money laundering and the deviation of chemical precursors. Such linked activities generally take place in developed countries and are as important as the growing of coca leaves or their transformation into cocaine.

Many studies indicate an increase in the consumption of illegal drugs in industrialized countries as well as an increase in new markets throughout the world. World statistics demonstrate that deaths from drug abuse have trebled since 1988 and that an increase of 1000 per cent has been observed in medical emergencies due to cocaine overdose between 1978 and 1993.

My country has battled, with more success than any other, against the producers of and traffickers in illegal drugs. Colombia eradicated marihuana crops in the 1970s, destroyed the Medellín Cartel in the 1980s and dismantled the Cali Cartel in the 1990s.

Colombia is responsible for more than 50 per cent of the poppy crops eradicated worldwide and for the confiscation of more than a quarter of the total amount of cocaine and cocaine base seized globally.

The eradication of illegal crops in Colombia must be accompanied by similar efforts to bring about the eradication of marihuana crops in other countries, including in some industrialized countries in the North.

During the first year of President Ernesto Samper's Administration, the anti-drug cartel policy has produced results that no prior administration in Colombia, or in any other nation, has been able to achieve.

Thanks to Colombia's success, the world now has a historic opportunity to defeat drug trafficking once and for all. Yet this opportunity could be missed if adequate measures are not immediately adopted to combat money laundering, the deviation of precursor chemicals and permissive consumption.

My country has proposed creating a special unit of the Economic and Social Council to oversee measures of international cooperation, the adoption of an inter-American convention against money laundering and the convening in 1997 of an international conference to

evaluate the results of the Vienna Convention and to make the necessary adjustments to it.

There is still time for the international community to face up to its responsibility to bring about the final defeat of this international scourge.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr. Boris Shikhmuradov.

Mr. Shikhmuradov (Turkmenistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Please allow me to offer sincere congratulations to Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly.

I would like to emphasize that this session of the General Assembly, in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, will occupy a special place in the history of the Organization. In that context, on behalf of Turkmenistan and President Niyazov, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts to build a new kind of international relations for the Organization.

The opportunity for our State to participate in the affairs of the world community as an independent entity flowed, of course, from those events that the Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, describes as

> "the momentum in world affairs that appeared so dramatically at the outset of this decade." *(A/50/1, para. 4)*

Serenely, and immensely grateful for its good fortune, Turkmenistan embarked on its independent course and, without any political romanticism, began to carry out its programme of building a nation-State and a system of foreign ties and seeking optimal ways for participating in international relations. This was a quest for Turkmenistan's place in the United Nations system and a model of statehood reflecting its national mentality and the traditions of the Turkmen people.

Since that time, in our four years of independent existence, we have travelled a great distance, and each step we have taken along the way has been both in the national interest of Turkmenistan and in the interest of stabilizing the region and strengthening international security, in the constant conviction that these two are inseparable.

After engaging in broad contacts within the system of Asian States, we have once again become convinced of the correctness of the conclusion drawn at the beginning of this century that Asia, with its enormous human, natural and intellectual resources, had every possibility of becoming the most prosperous region in the world. However, throughout the entire history of the Asian continent, instability and protracted regional conflicts have often, unfortunately, constituted the political background, and this has significantly complicated the solution of problems of internal development.

Turkmenistan has set as its main priority the preservation of internal stability and social peace in carrying out radical reforms in building its State and its economy. This is vitally necessary in order for us to take advantage of our enormous resource potential. But that important condition is not the only one: the other is stability around us so that we can freely and naturally develop our trade and economic relations with other States. This question is of special interest, in view of the world's share of hydrocarbon deposits and other mineral and biological resources that Turkmenistan possesses.

Turkmenistan is at one of the world's important crossroads of political and economic interests, in a regional dimension and beyond. Aware of this geopolitical reality, Turkmenistan is prepared to participate in the most constructive way in establishing new relations in the region and to promote efforts to establish there overall stability, security and effective and mutually advantageous cooperation on the basis of the principles of the United Nations.

We believe that with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain's disappearance from its borders with its southern neighbours, a new region has emerged, a new community of States of Central Asia, the Middle East, South-West Asia, the Caucasus and part of the Near East. This region is united by common development interests, the restoration of historical trade and economic relations and cultural and humanitarian traditions.

This was the logic that led to the idea of active participation in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I would like to emphasize that the ECO's configuration fully corresponds to our concept of a new region's emergence following the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: the restoration of a natural gravitational attraction between these States that

for decades were artificially divided by an ideological barrier, which conditions for them the priority of transportation, telecommunications and energy programmes. Underlying these processes lies the principle of absolute economic feasibility, based on the mutual interests of the member States of the ECO and the absence of any political, territorial or other disputes between them.

As for the internal tensions that persist in some countries, we should stress that economic cooperation, participation and joint projects will create fertile soil for constructive solutions to these problems. Turkmenistan believes that this 10-country organization, emerging at such an important time, will open up additional possibilities for the newly independent States to the south of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Furthermore, the basis of our political and economic strategy is the principle of reasonable pragmatism and the preservation of positive experiences and ties from the past. We have a politically new type of State. Its independent status cannot be achieved by denying the realities of the past and old ties that can still serve our higher interests today. In this respect, our relations with Russia and other partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have remained a key component of Turkmenistan's foreign policy.

I would like to lay special emphasis on the fact that the obligations that neutral Turkmenistan has assumed have been set out in our Constitution and have been supported by the people. These obligations not only take account of national interests but also objectively promote the development of cooperation in the region, and they have enormous potential for stimulating the peacemaking processes in the area and for promoting the efforts of the world community, primarily here at the United Nations, to rid it of obsolete measures and adopt preventive measures to defuse disputes and conflicts.

I would like to set out some parameters of Turkmenistan's neutrality initiative in order to make sure that it is correctly understood by our partners in the United Nations and supported by them as well.

The rapid pace of recent events determined the changes in Asia's geopolitical and geo-economic situation. The nature and direction of inter-State and regional processes, an important component of some of these changes, has resulted in the formation of new, independent States, each having chosen its own independent path of development and having its own interests. One of the ways in which the uniqueness of each country has been manifested is in its political path, as is natural. For each country that path is based on the people's historical roots, mentality and psychological make-up. Turkmenistan is no exception to this. Merging the prospects for its own development with the direction and nature of regional and continental processes and linking national interests with the objective requirements of the day — from this theoretical and practical basis we have arrived at the need to proclaim neutrality as a principle and instrument of Turkmenistan's foreign policy. We are pleased that our neutrality initiative is finding more and more support, attracting civil and political interest and receiving broad international recognition. We are grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for providing Turkmenistan with assistance in this regard.

In the context of asserting itself as a neutral State, Turkmenistan requested admission to the Non-Aligned Movement as a full-fledged member. We hope that during the non-aligned summit in Cartagena, Colombia, Turkmenistan's membership will be confirmed. In this context, I would like to state Turkmenistan's conviction that the idea of non-alignment is both a vital and a viable one. We do not share the view that it is archaic. We believe that we must not participate in the two conflicting global systems and that we need to turn to an idea of non-participation in the various rigid regional blocs, multi-State formations capable of generating considerable destructive force. Turkmenistan advocates non-alignment, as well as non-participation in improper acts of intervention in the internal affairs of States, non-participation in efforts for global or regional dominance and non-participation in schemes to limit the role of the United Nations or weaken the universal and proven machinery for implementing global policy. Such practices serve selfish purposes.

We are convinced that the use of military force to solve existing conflicts has no future, but that negotiations are effective. Although seeking peaceful means is complex, alternatives do not exist. At the same time, we understand that without active efforts, without good will, it will hardly be possible to attain the desired result. Therefore, *inter alia*, while not intervening in the Tajik conflict, we are prepared to play a role in holding the next round of inter-Tajik negotiations. We welcome and commend the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations and Russia, Iran, Pakistan and other countries in this process.

Naturally, we must be concerned at the situation unfolding in neighbouring Afghanistan. Supporting contacts with the central Government in Kabul, as well as with regional leaders, we believe that the Afghans must be helped to demonstrate their ability to achieve peace and consensus in their country, and that attempts to intervene in Afghanistan's internal affairs not only are counter-productive, but may lead to highly undesirable consequences. In that context, I would like to emphasize that Turkmenistan gives priority to the United Nations, to the Secretary-General's efforts to find an acceptable machinery for an Afghan settlement. Turkmenistan agrees with the concern expressed from this rostrum at the continuing internal Afghan conflict. Turkmenistan has a long border with this long-suffering State and is truly interested in finding a prompt settlement to the Afghan problem. We are also interested in the success of the special representative of the United Nations, who in our view requires serious support from the United Nations. We cannot allow a situation whereby efforts to focus on solving one conflict cause less attention to be paid to another, resulting in negative consequences.

Just as mankind has become aware that the nuclear threat has a global dimension, we are also aware that today we need an adequate response to all regional and local disputes and conflicts. I would like to emphasize that Ashkhabad is prepared to engage in constructive cooperation with the United Nations on these issues, and to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of constructive neutrality.

All countries and peoples are now adapting in their own ways to new conditions in the world, which dictate the need to adopt a common philosophy of security, based on the principle of security for one and security for all. I would like to emphasize that at this stage we are talking about a philosophy, of perceptions of the world, reflecting realities in Asian countries, in particular. This philosophy excludes the use of force, diktat, as a means of solving political disputes, and its main principles should include equality, humanism, social and economic progress, and healthy pragmatism.

Here I should like to support what was said by my colleague from Germany, Mr. Klaus Kinkel, who emphasized that we must not allow hostile stereotypes to become instilled in people's minds and that we cannot associate in one sweep Islam with terrorism and fundamentalism. We welcome this assertion and express our conviction that this attitude will become universal.

As for Turkmenistan, we are fundamental advocates of a secular State model, in which religion would play its proper role. We believe that, as has been emphasized by President Niyasov, a poly-ethnic, multi-faith State model and structure is more effective, more fruitful, than a mono-ethnic and mono-religious State.

I take this opportunity to emphasize the support that Turkmenistan has received, through its participation in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in European matters, as one of the legal successors of the former federated State. This has created for us, in a difficult transitional time of colossal transformations, the possibility of benefiting from Asian-European development. In that context, the words of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. Hervé de Charette, were very important for us, when he spoke about the States of Asia and Africa and about focusing on the first meeting of Heads of State of Asia and Africa, set for March 1996. We hope, within the context of activating work on the Euro-Asian bridge, that there will be other major projects, with the participation of Turkmenistan, on a direct window to Europe. Primarily, we are talking about a north-south transit corridor to link Europe and Asia, through the territory of Russia and Turkmenistan, facilitating the supply of Turkmen energy to European markets and so on.

I should like to emphasize that we have witnessed a significant, if not radical, increase in international interest in Caspian Sea matters, and the utilization of its abundant natural resources. Our conceptual approach to this is based on the idea that the Caspian Sea is a unique water basin and the common property of the five coastal States. In the making of plans for the development of its resources account should be taken of those States' interests; their consent should be required and no unilateral decisions should be taken. Turkmenistan firmly advocates the prevention of any naval activities in the Caspian Sea, and favours freedom of navigation, on the basis of a legal status to be developed by the littoral States. We must create legal and economic conditions that will guarantee a normal regime for foreign investment and exclude any risks for investors, such as the emergence of a situation of distrust between the States of the basin.

At the coming anniversary session of the General Assembly next month, President Niyasov will set forth the principles of the domestic and foreign policies of Turkmenistan, focusing on problems being taken up by the United Nations, an Organization reflecting the face of

mankind, which today faces a new millennium with its unique challenges and times and circumstances. We sincerely congratulate each other, and first and foremost congratulate the Secretary-General, as we are absolutely convinced that the United Nations, in this year of its fiftieth anniversary, will prove that it is essential to the world as the highest international assembly, developing an agenda for global partnership in the twenty-first century.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first, and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Spanish delegation feels duty-bound to exercise its right of reply.

My delegation would like to refer to the mentions of the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla contained in the statement made here today by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco. Such references are not in keeping with reality, since those are Spanish territories, whose citizens are represented in the Spanish Parliament with the same rights and under the same conditions as their compatriots, and it is not possible to establish any parallels with other situations which are quite different in nature.

Such references are not appropriate, since they are not in keeping with the overall relationship which exists between the Kingdoms of Spain and of Morocco, bilaterally as well as in the region as a whole, to which we both, as neighbours, belong.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): I am speaking in exercise of the right of reply because the Foreign Minister of India made a reference in his statement this morning to Jammu and Kashmir as a State in India. Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory and Pakistan is a party to this dispute. To describe the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir as a State in India is totally fallacious and a distortion of the facts as they are known to the United Nations. The relevant Security Council resolutions clearly determine that the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people, expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. The Indian claim that Kashmir is an integral part of India is therefore untenable and incorrect.

Only a week ago, the spokesperson of the Indian External Affairs Ministry, while commenting on the United Nations Secretary-General's offer of mediation on Kashmir, said that India remained fully committed to the resolution of the Kashmir issue peacefully, in accordance with the Simla Agreement. If Jammu and Kashmir was a part of the Indian Union, why would India appeal to the Government of Pakistan "to demonstrate sincerity in finding a peaceful solution to the Jammu and Kashmir problem"? Why would the Secretary-General want to offer his good offices on an Indian province? Or why would it be raised in international forums? The fact of the matter is that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory.

The Indian Foreign Minister also described terrorism as the "black plague" of our times, and we fully agree. But he went on to say that it is specious logic to say that one man's freedom-fighter is another man's terrorist. The fact is that the United Nations has consistently underlined the distinction between terrorism, on the one hand, and the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation for the realization of their right to self-determination and national liberation, on the other hand. The latter is exactly the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, where for the past 47 years an oppressed population has been struggling to seek liberation from the Indian yoke. Its struggle is not a movement for secession; it is not a violation of the territorial integrity of a country: it is the realization of a promise that was made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir by the United Nations and agreed to by India and Pakistan. No amount of distortion of history or attempts to cloud the issue by sidetracking it can change the irrefutable validity of Security Council resolutions freely accepted but subsequently reneged on by India.

Terrorism, in any case, should be condemned and opposed in all its forms and manifestations, including State-sponsored terrorism targeting people living under alien domination and foreign occupation. The United Nations should not appease the States that are involved in organized terrorism against the people of occupied territories. With 600,000 armed troops in Jammu and Kashmir terrorizing an innocent people, we are witnessing State-sponsored terrorism at its worst.

Reference was also made by the Foreign Minister of India to the unfortunate incident of hostage-taking in Kashmir. We have already had occasion to point out in this forum the mounting evidence of Indian complicity in this gruesome act. This time again, as in past instances, foreign tourists have been taken hostage by a group unknown to all, including to the 34-member All-Parties Hurriyet Conference. Al-Faran, a group which manages to operate with immunity in one of the most heavily soldiered regions of the world, a group which manages to stay in regular communication and contact with the Indian authorities, without their being able to trace it — all this is only part of the circumstantial evidence of a plot masterminded by Indian intelligence agencies to denigrate the Kashmiri struggle for freedom. No one here is gullible enough to accept Indian professions of piety.

Finally, the Indian Foreign Minister said that democracy alone is not a guarantee against colonial rule or wars. We agree. In fact, here is the so-called largest democracy in the world responsible for the largest operation of State-sponsored terrorism and the most gruesome human rights violations seen over the past 50 years.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): Some opinions expressed today on nuclear tests, in the framework of the general debate, make it necessary for my delegation to set forth certain facts once again.

First of all, our underground nuclear tests are in no way detrimental to the environment; eminent scientists have demonstrated this on many occasions.

Secondly, the final tests, eight at the most, that France finds it necessary to carry out are not contrary to its commitment to exercise the utmost restraint. Restraint is not the same thing as prohibition. Furthermore — and this point is fundamental — far from being contrary to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the last programme of tests now under way serves the achievement of that goal. Indeed, because of this final programme of tests, to be concluded before the end of May 1996, France will be in a position to commit itself to such an international agreement without any reservations.

Furthermore, the completion of our tests will make it possible for my country to argue resolutely for what is known as the zero-option — that is, for a treaty prohibiting any nuclear-weapons testing or any other nuclear explosion, at any level. France, as the Assembly knows, was the first nuclear Power to commit itself to this essential option, and my delegation is pleased to see that several States have welcomed that commitment.

The most recent French tests thus come within the context of, and must be seen from the point of view of, the impending conclusion of a truly significant treaty, namely a treaty that does not envisage any exception or allow for any circumvention.

Ms. Murugesan (India): The representative of Pakistan does not tire of wasting the valuable time of this Assembly. The unfounded and baseless allegations he has just made are only a reflection of the frustration that is axiomatic when truth is pushed under the carpet and an attempt is made to build an edifice on falsehood. Or is this latest outburst reflective of a guilty conscience? It is no doubt a mixture of the two.

I am intrigued that the representative of Pakistan has chosen to exercise his right of reply in response to the statement made earlier today in the Assembly by the leader of my delegation. I do not recall, nor I am sure can anyone else in this Assembly recall, any reference to Pakistan in our statement today. We can therefore draw the only possible logical conclusion: that Pakistan is actively engaged in interfering in the internal affairs of India.

Blaming India is so juvenile a reaction to Pakistan's own culpability in sponsoring, supporting and sustaining terrorism in its most brutal form in India that it deserves no response. Such an allegation from a State that has turned its armed might against its own people is ironic, to say the least.

The only impediment to dialogue between India and Pakistan is Pakistan's continued export of terrorism in its most brutal form into India. Pakistan's greed for Indian territory has fuelled three wars which, by the acknowledgement of Pakistan's own generals, were started by Pakistan; and since 1989, that greed has fuelled Pakistan's proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir through terrorism. This is the distinction in Jammu and Kashmir between terrorism and self-determination. Self-determination here is predetermination by Pakistan.

Pakistan should be condemned by the international community as a sponsor of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations — cross-border, State-sponsored terrorism in India and Afghanistan, ongoing State terrorism against ethnic minorities in Sind, clear linkages to international terrorism such as the World Trade Center bombing, and

several other incidents in the Middle East. The terrorist camps and schools run by Pakistan should be shut down.

Our official spokesman stated on 21 September that in spite of the numerous provocations by Pakistan, the Indian security forces have exercised enormous restraint. There is no threat to peace and security in the region from the Indian side of the Line of Control or the international border. The Government of India hopes that the Government of Pakistan would demonstrate sincerity in finding a peaceful solution by eschewing sponsorship of terrorism across the Line of Control and returning to the negotiating table for a meaningful dialogue.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): Once again we have heard one of India's representatives trying to hide their own guilt behind non-relevant arguments. We dismiss their allegations with the contempt that they deserve. The central and only point that has to be addressed is that of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Can the Indian representative deny that the United Nations, of which this Assembly is a constituent part, duly recognizes Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory? Can she deny that the Security Council resolutions clearly state that the future of Jammu and Kashmir is to be determined by a plebiscite, to be held under the auspices of the United Nations? Can she deny that the Security Council resolutions remain valid and operative until they are fully implemented? Can she deny that the concentration of Indian troops in Kashmir is the largest such concentration since the Second World War, with a ratio of one Indian soldier to every three adult male Kashmiris? Can she deny the systematic killing, torture and rape of civilians by Indian troops or the torching of their homes, villages and townships, as documented by so many human rights organizations? Can she deny the excellent means of communication that exist between Indian security and intelligence forces and the Al-Faran outfit, which has taken innocent Western tourists hostage and beheaded one of them?

Can she deny that it is India that has opposed the proposal by Pakistan for an increased strengthening of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) along the Line of Control, so that these facile allegations of theirs can be monitored by the United Nations itself? Can she deny, finally, that despite repeated proposals by Pakistan, it is India that has rejected the offer for an independent, neutral international fact-finding mission to visit both sides of the Line of Control, to establish once and for all what is the true state of affairs in this disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir?

These are the relevant questions, to which we, and this Assembly, want clear answers from the Indian delegation. They are entitled to a reply to a statement in right of reply. We challenge them to come on record to answer these questions in front of the Assembly.

Mr. Surie (India): I have no intention of further dignifying the representative of Pakistan by wasting the time of this Assembly. However, I would only urge Pakistan to look deep within itself and cleanse itself of the devil that lurks within.

Jammu and Kashmir is, and shall remain, an integral part of India. This is an immutable fact.

The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.